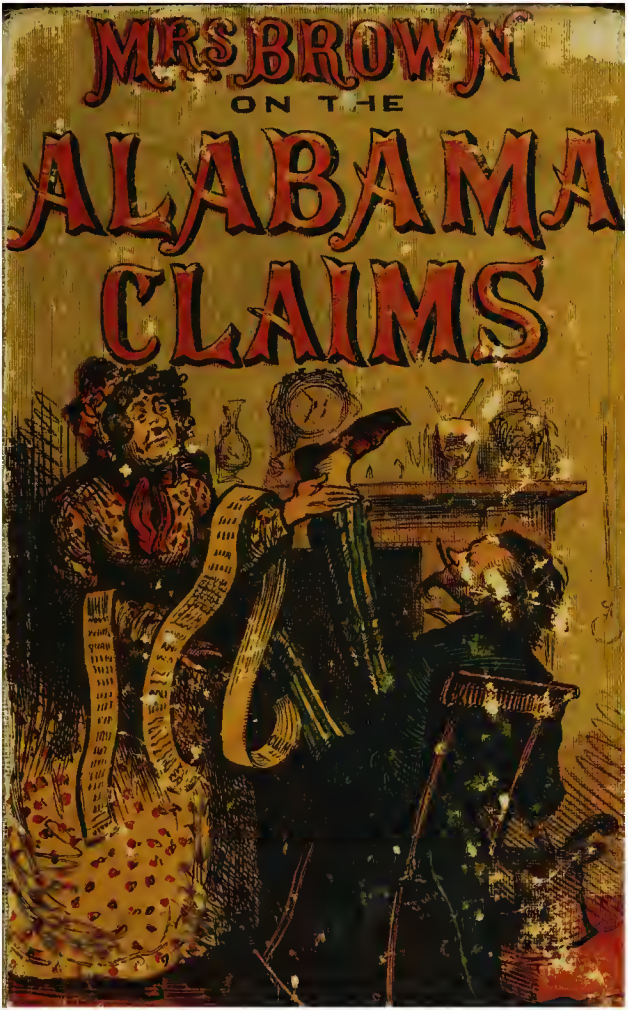
MRS BROWN ON THE ALABAMA CLAIMS



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MRS. BROWN

ON

THE ALABAMA CLAIMS.

BY

ARTHUR SKETCHLEY,

AUTHOR OF

"THE BROWN PAPERS," "MRS. BROWN AT THE PLAY," ETC. ETC.

LONDON:

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THE BROADWAY, LUDGATE.

PREFACE.

I MUST say as certingly I were dreadful took aback when Mrs. Pulford fust mentioned it; leastways, not fust, for she's a woman as 'er word is not wot I considers gospel truth for to take your davy on, as the sayin' is, partikler arter 'er supper, when she's apt to talk thick, and says all manner to me over 'er little drop of 'ot the last thing; and one evenin' she says to me, she says, "Them Merrykins is at it ag'in."

"Oh," I says, "bless 'em, they're always at it, as is a restless lot, and will go on inwentin' to the end of their time, like the sewin'-machine, as is certingly wonderful wot it will get thro' in a day, not but wot it were werry stupid of that Jane Linfield for to go and run it thro' 'er aunt's thumb-

nail, poor thing, just as she was a-beginnin' to learn 'ow to work it."

So I didn't take no notice of Mrs. Pulford's words till Sunday evenin', when she began ag'in, jest as Mrs. Padwick stepped in for to talk about the Queen a-goin' to St. Paul's, as we'd agreed for to go and see together.

Well, I was a-makin' the tea, when I 'eard them two a-talkin' about the Merrykin war.

So I says, "Oh, do let bygones be bygones, we've fought over it once, and," I says, "it's no use always a-talkin' of it over and over ag'in, jest like Waterloo with the French."

"Ah," says Mrs. Pulford, "I'd rather 'ave fifty wars with the French than one with the Merrykins."

I says, "Would you, then I wouldn't; for," I says, "France is a deal too near for us always to be a-fightin', and," I says, "as to the Merrykins, they can't go and inwent no guns as'll carry a ball from New York to London; but the French might 'ave one as would kill any one easy from Calais to Dover, the same as Queen Lizabeth's pocket-pistol in Dover Castle, as if loaded full, and you keep it clean, could carry a ball to Calais Green;" but I says, "wotever are you a-talkin' about wars with Merryker for?"

"Why," says Mrs. Pulford, "cos of these 'ere Hallyblammer claims."

"Oh!" I says, "who may he be. I suppose one of these 'ere companies, as they calls Bogus over there, and 'as been the ruin of thousands, like that there Mr. Fisk, as they've been and shot like a dog over in New York, as is wot the Merrykins calls fun, and in course won't 'ang the man as did it, any more than that parson as were let off for murderin' 'is wife over Brixton way of a Sunday evenin', as in my opinion did ought to 'ave been 'ung if he'd 'ad forty necks."

"Tho' pre'aps now they won't be quite so ready at lettin' them murderers go arter the way as that willin 'ave been and killed that Lord Mayor of Injy, jest as he were a-steppin' aboard of a wessel to go to his wife and family at Glasgow."

"No! no!" I says, "them as'll commit one murder will commit two, so they did ought to be 'anged the fust time, or else, if mad, locked up for life; but none of your dodges about their bein' recovered, and so let go free."

Mrs. Padwick, she've got a werry bad 'abit of droppin' off to a nap, while you're a-talkin' with 'er cup in 'er 'and, and don't attend much; and as to Mrs. Pulford, she's as testy as she can 'ang

together, so she says, "Oh! Martha, do 'old your clack, as is runnin' on for everlastin'."

So bein' well on in years, I didn't answer 'er, but finished up my tea, as Mrs. Padwick kep' on a-noddin' over, so I took 'er cup from 'er, and sat a-thinkin' about everythink.

It weren't till Brown come 'ome from Brumagem as ever I understood what were meant by the Ally-blammer claims, tho' I've been on that river myself, as is where the cotton grows.

So I says to 'im, "Wotever 'ave we got to do with the Allyblammer?"

"Why," he says, "the Merrykins is wild with us for lettin' of it go to sea, and all the destruction as it made."

I says, "Rubbish; wotever will they want next?" I says; "why, 'owever can we 'elp the Allyblammer a-runnin' out to sea any more than any other river, as will, in course, all find their levels sooner or later, tho' some must 'ave to go to the bottom of the sea to do it."

So Brown he never said a word but a grunt now and then, till I stopped for to take my breath, when he says, "Now, old leather'ead, don't go a-runniu' your skull ag'in the wrong post, for it ain't

the Allyblammer river as we're a-talkin' about, cos that never did the mischief in the war."

I says, "I knows that, as were all along of that Gin'ral Butler, as were down in them parts, as burnt up all the cotton fields, both sides of the river, and they do say, sacked all the grand pianos as he could lay 'is fingers on, and burnt 'em right and left, all but them as was wuth sellin', not as we can say much on that score, cos look 'ow we've gone on in Indier with the Koeynore, and a lot more things as we've been and cadged from them niggers; as I were a-sayin' to a lady the day of the Thanksgivin', when I see that Nabob of Nepaul a-goin' to St. Paul's that 'umble, in 'is grand carridge, all covered with jewels and gold, as ain't got much to be thankful to us for, tho' in course we've showed 'im wot good Christians we are, as don't covet our naybor's goods, but only picks a quarrel with them, and then takes and strips 'em of heverythink, like that Queen of Oude, as lived in the New Road, as come over 'ere to get justice, as wasn't no great shakes 'erself, but not wuss than Queen Lizzybeth, so we can't talk."

"Now," says Brown, "do you want to know anythink about these 'ere Allyblammer claims, or do you not ?"

"Well, I say knowledge is power, as the sayin' is, so in course should like to know everythink."

"Well, then," says Brown, "the Allyblammer were a wessel wot played the deuce with the Merrykins during their war."

"Oh!" I says, "in course, I remembers as were sunk one Sunday mornin' off the Isle of White, with a gentleman and 'is family, and the governess a-lookin' on to see fair play aboard of 'is yott, instead of goin' to church, as ain't wot I calls bringin' up a family proper, but shows as them South Merrykins is a plucky lot, as would rather be blowed up than give in to them Northerners; but," I says, "Brown, wotever 'ave we got to do with that, as that gentleman only looked on, and picked up the wouuded, as I've 'eard say was all a-walkin' up and down 'Igh Street, Southampton the next day, a-glarin' at one another from the other side of the way."

So Brown, he says, "Oh! I give it up," and wouldn't say another word, but turned the subject to liver and bacon, as we were a-goin' to 'ave for supper, and jest then begun to smell werry relishin', and certingly that gal 'ave learut to fry to my fancy, not as she dare ever bring me up a fried chop, as is a thing I cousiders a downright insult,

partikler when told never on no account to do it, but wait for the fire to clear with the gridiron, if it were arf-a-'our.

Well, arter that, I were so took up with that Tichbung case, and then the Thanksgivin', as put the Allyblammer claims, as they calls it, out of my 'ead.

For never in my life did I see anythink like that Thanksgivin' day, as there never was sich a one knowed, not since they berried Queen Lizzybeth, as every one were glad to get rid on, a wicked old 'ussey.

Not in course as I remembers that, nor yet my dear mother neither, tho' she see Queen Caroline that day as she tried for to break into Westminster Habbey, and would, no doubt, 'ave 'ad the crown off King George's 'ead, wig and all, in a jiffey, if she'd 'ave got in, as would not 'ave been decent in a church.

I've 'eard them talk, as well remembered King George a-goin' to St. Paul's to return thanks for 'is 'ealth bein' restored, as some say, drove 'im mad, along with the death of the Princess Amelia, as put that ring on 'is finger, as she did ought to 'ave give 'im years afore, and then, pre'aps, he would not 'ave 'ung Dr. Dodd, as prayed on 'im, no doubt,

thro' bein' a clergyman, and only forgery, as ain't like murderin' your wife, like that old willin at Brixton, tho' werry unpleasant for to 'ave all your money drawed out in a false name, and then come to the workus arter workin' 'ard all your days.

I'm that glad as the weather were that fine for the Thanksgivin', and all went off so well, and do 'ope as the Prince won't 'ave took no cold without 'is 'at all that time, and a-standin' on the balcony arterwards.

With Queen Wictoria a-openin' the winder 'erself and a-steppin' out, as shows as she weren't as much knocked up as might be espected arter such a ride there and back, with all them people a-shoutin' enuf to stun 'er.

I'm thankful as the Prince were equal to it, poor feller, as must 'ave been werry affectin' to 'is feclin's, and to see the lovely picters as there is about it, partikler one in "Punch," as drawed tears in my own eyes; not as 'im or 'is royal ma were dressed a bit like that when I see 'em go by, but pre'aps put on their other clothes in church, like the Bishop of London as I see go by in 'is cock 'at and apron, in a carridge full of fieldmales, and must 'ave slipped on 'is black satin gownd, with full muslin sleeves in the westry, as is wot the Arch-

bishop of Canterbury went by in, for I see 'im myself, and thought he were some old duchess in widder's weeds.

I were thankful as that day went off as it did, tho' you didn't ketch me a-goin' to no luminations the next day, for to be trampled to death by the crowd, the same as 'undreds was by Temple Bar, as I had a narrer escape on myself the night afore; but were werry much put out when a party told me as I were in the noosepapers, as a perliceman said as I pulled a bottle out of my pocket to drink Queen Wictoria's 'ealth as she were a-passin', and then wanted to shy the bottle arter 'er, as I shouldn't consider the hact of a lady myself, and if ever I see that perliceman I shall tell 'im so to 'is face, as is a good-for-nothink inwentor.

I'm sure I shan't forget the day arter the Thanksgivin', as were pretty nigh as bad as the day itself for the crowds, as 'ad to get to Bow myself, and never got a bus till Cheapside, and werry nigh choked with dust, but am glad as I walked along Fleet Street, if it were only for to see a lovely picter over a church door, as they calls St. Dunstin, all about the Prince of Wales in bed with a angel at 'is 'ead, and a bald-'eaded Protestant minister and a Catholic bishop, with a 'Ebrew Jew

on 'is knees, with a roll in 'is 'ands, and another party 'ad got somethink on a plate, as looked like a pine apple all round 'im.

I don't know what it meant, but it looked to me as if they was a-askin' 'im to choose 'is religion afore he died; as in course is open to all for to do, and werry proper, though full late, but better late than never, as the sayin' is, if they've got their senses about 'em, as ain't always the case; tho' I 'ave knowed parties sensible to the werry last grasp, and recover arter, as that was the way with Mrs. Welby, as busted 'er quinsey, when give over by all the doctors, thro' a fit of laughture as were brought on thro' 'er a-seein' Welby take a good swig at a tumbler full of embrocation left standin' on the drawers as he thought were wine, and lived to berry 'im and her two dorters many years arter.

I do think nobody wouldn't 'ave knowed Londou to 'ave seen it that gay, as must 'ave stopped busyness all the week; not but wot they were busy enuf, goodness knows.

As I were a-goin' along I were werry much struck by wot parties 'ad rote up in front of their 'ouses for thanksgivin's; not as I 'olds with that guumaker, as mixed up trust in the Almighty and

keepin' of your powder dry, as I calls a-makin' too free.

Then there was another as was for givin' thanks to Evan, and Gull, and Jenner.

"So," I says, "whyever not throw in the glass of beer and the 'ot sheep-skins, as all had a 'and in it, along with Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Williams as nussed 'im."

But, law, some parties 'asn't no taste over them matters.

I were sorry to 'ear about them casualties as 'appened; "but," as I says to Mrs. Billers, "whyever can't them casuals keep of 'arm's way, as is often impostors, as I've 'card as some turns out to be worth property, as often 'as money on 'em, and then to come to want a night's lodgin' in a workus.

I had quite words over that there Thanksgivin' day, with a party as calls 'isself a adwanced thinker, and come in one evenin' to Mrs. Padwick's, thro' bein' friends with a young man as lodges there, and says it were all rubbish and out of date, the Queen and Prince a-goin' like that for to return thanks.

"Well," I says, "any'ow that's their busyness; but," I says, "of course if it's wrong in the Queen

or any one else to return thanks, it were more wrong to pray."

He says, "It's all esploded superstition."

I says, "Oh! indeed," I says, "and pray who says so?"

"Oh?" he says, "tens of thousands as 'ave got sense in their 'eads; and," he says, "you should 'ear a party as I goes to of a Sunday, as proves it is all foolishness."

I says, "Wot is all foolishness?"

"Oh," he says, "why, all this fuss about nothink;" and went on a-sayin' as he were one of them as thought and rote all about them things in a paper as proved religion was more 'arm than good.

I says, "In course it ain't for me to say nothink ag'in a party as knows as much as you do; but," I says, "I wants to know 'ow you come to be so much wiser than so many others, as seem to 'ave got their intellects, and a deal of larnin' too."

"Oh!" he says, "if you means them bishops and parsons, why, it's their trade, and a werry good one too."

I says, "They certingly are well paid, some on 'em."

"Yes," he says, "purple and fine linen, and farin' sumptuous every day."

"Well," I says, "that's their look out, cos if they believes wot they preaches, they must know it'll be bad for them by and by, as 'ave got riches in this world, if they don't use 'em well."

"Oh!" he says, "believe wot they preaches, indeed. Walker! Catch 'em bein' such flats. Why, there's lots on 'em as takes the money and don't believe a word of it, as they shows by preachin' agin it."

"Then," I says, "they're a set of willins; but," I says, "that don't make religion wrong, only them as purfesses it falsely; but," I says, "you runs down the religion, and I wants to know 'ow you're a-goin' to prove as you're right."

"Oh!" he says, "common sense will show it."

I says, "Escuse me, uncommon sense, you mean. No!" I says, "it won't do, you're only a-settin' up a-guessin' shop, and there's lots of them already, and life's a deal too short for to listen to all every one 'ave got to say;" so I says, "I prefers a-stickin' to the old-fashioned ways, as teaches me my duty, and don't want none of your new-fangled notions."

"Ah!" he says, "hignorance and prejudice; why," he says, "there's bishops as don't believe the Bible, and a live dook been and rote a book to show as it's all false."

"Well," I says, "in course a dook did ought to know heverything, but," I says, "I don't suppose as this 'ere dook's a deal more clever than other dooks, partikler the Dook of Wellin'ton, as served 'is country and did 'is dooty; and as to religion, never interfered about them things, as was out of 'is line."

He says, "Wot's that got to do with it?"

"Why," I says, "a good deal; cos if I'm to listen to one dook, why not to another; but," I says, "my good young man, don't you go a-fancyin' as you knows a deal better nor your naybors, cos if you do, you'll get a bad fall some day; but," I says, "you keep straight, and do as you'd be done by, and don't try for to teach your grandmother to suck eggs, cos," I says, "you wasn't born afore everybody else, and ain't got no partikler straight tip about them things as can make you wiser than your betters, as you'd best leave alone."

He were a-goin' on a deal more, but we all said as we didn't care about it, and was much obliged to 'im all the same, as shet 'im up with 'is rubbish, a-talkin' about overturnin' Christianity.

"Ah!" I says, "you must get up early the day as you does that, with all your ritin' and readin', and even 'rethmetic throwed in."

I don't know as ever I should 'ave thought about their Allyblammer claims, as they calls 'em, only but for parties a-meetin' me constant, and a-askin' my opinion, thro' 'avin' been over in Merryker.

"Well," I says, "in course I 'ave been there and still would go, as the sayin' is; for there's a-many things as they wants settin' right in as I could do easy; for they ain't a bad 'arted lot, but that dreadful pinionated in their ways, as is often the way with them as is hignorant, and wot's the wust of it in Merryker is, as them as 'ave got good sense and good feelin's keeps in the background and won't interfere, but leaves things to be managed by a noisy lot, as don't care for nothink but to get elected into places, so says anythink as will please the mob, as 'ave all got wotes, as'll end bad some day as sure as my name is Martha, and so I've told 'em over and over ag'in.

MRS. BROWN ON THE ALABAMA CLAIMS.

Wot with one thing and wot with another, I 'adn't give that Allyblammer nonsense a second thought, as the sayin' is, well a-knowin' as them Merrykins was only their fun, and 'adn't no time for fun till that Thanksgivin' Day were over, and felt thankful as I weren't crushed to death myself, or pretty near like poor Emma Grimble, as went to see the luminations, and were wedged that tight by the shoulder into some airy railin's, as get her out they couldn't without cuttin' 'er welweteen jacket and two shawls as she'd got on, thro' bein' delikit, and afeared of the night-air, and took to 'er bed as soon as she got 'ome, and laid there a-tremblin' from 'ead to foot for over three days thro' the fright, as she didn't show at the time; leastways, young Prattin, as is 'er young man, and took 'er out that evenin', said as she didn't seem to mind the crowdin' a bit; as is the way with some, as shows it all the more arterwards, as were 'er case, poor thing.

Well, as I were a-sayin', I 'adn't given Merryker a thought, nor yet them claims, till they come across me like a flash all of a suddin in goin' along the Strand that werry day arter the Show; for wot should I see on them newspaper-offices winders but about them Allyblammer claims.

So when Brown got in as he did to supper that night, 'avin' run up from Brumagem like nothink, and was a-settin' arter it over 'is pipe, I says, "Now, Brown, do tell me all about these 'ere Merrykin claims."

"Well," he says, "I will, if you'll promise not to go a-bustin' all over the place like a flock of lambs as 'ears the train a-comin' the fust time afore they're used to it."

I says, "Brown, I will set as mum as a mouse if you'll tell me all about it, as is a thing I did ought to know. I feels I ought, cos about our Joe bein' over in them parts, as I should send for at once if we're a-goin' to war."

Not but wot Mrs. Skidmore will be my friend to my dyin' day, I knows, and I'm sure won't never wote for war, nor yet let them as belongs to 'er, for my sake.

Brown only bust out a-larfin', and says, "I do think as it would be a good plan for to leave it to the old women to settle both sides, as wouldn't make a wuss mess on it than some of the old

women as 'ave got the settlin' of our side of the question."

"Ah," I says, "it's all werry fine to jeer at old women, but they knows a deal more than some old men, or young ones either, tho' they do think their-selves so precious knowin' about everythink."

So Brown says, "Are you a-goin' to listen, or are you not?"

I says, "In a minnit; but will you have any lemon in it to-night?"

He says, "Only a small bit of peel," as I mixed him accordin', and, with only a little tooth-glass for myself, sat as quiet as a lamb a-listenin' to him; and certingly he did lay it down that clear about them claims, as I says when it were over, "Brown," I says, "you did ought to be in Parley-ment."

He says, "You did ought to be in bed; for," he says, "you've 'ad one eye shet and the other only 'arf open the last 'our."

I says, "It were only my way of listenin', thro' not a-wishin' to 'ave my attention took off with that cat and kitten a-playin' about the place, as is always most lively jest about bed-time; as I never will let the gal shet 'em up; for, as I says, if they ar'n't got free range, 'owever can they do their dooty by the mice?

It were two days arter as Mrs. Trimley come in

as is one as is always full of them rumours of wars; and she says to me, "It's all over with us now."

I says, "Wot's all over with us?"

"Why," she says, "we shall soon 'ave them Merrykins a-annexin' of us."

I says, "'Owever are they a-goin' to manage that, as will take a deal of Atlantic cable to jine us."

"Oh," she says, "don't go a-talkin' like that, as is werry well for you as don't live at the sea-side 'arf the year"—as is 'er 'abits, thro' 'avin' a dorter as is married to a Deal pilot.

So I say, "Oh! cheer up," I says, "remember the Battle of Dorkin' all ended in smoke, and if the Merrykins nexes Deal, they'll take a deal more afore they've done, so we shall all be in the same boat."

"Oh!" she says, "but only faney as my dorter's 'ouse faces the sea, as one of them long rangin' guns could pick all the family off in their werry beds!"

"Ah," I says, "no doubt they'll die quiet in their beds, for all the 'arm as the Merrykin guns can do 'em;" so I says, "don't let that fluster you, but take off your bonnet, and we'll soon have tea, and a good cup too, as is more than you can get all thro' Merryker."

She's a good soul, is Mrs. Trimley, as ever trod

shoe leather, but is short-tempered, thro' 'avin' supped sorrer by the ladleful, as the sayin' is, with family troubles, as she've 'ad by the peck, and in course low sperrits in consequence, as any one would with a berryin' nine in their teeth, and two 'usbans a-top of 'em, tho' I shouldn't 'ave considered Trimley no loss myself, for he was a frightful temper, and give to preachin'; and the two together was enuf to break any woman's sperrits, partikler 'avin' to nuss 'im over three year, and always bein' told as she were a child of perdition, thro' not attendin' the same chapel with 'im, as she 'ave told me often and often as she couldn't stand his sermons both in the pulpit and out on it too, and never practisin' of it at 'ome; and drove 'er dorter into a foolish marridge, tho' it turned out well in the end thro' 'im a-takin' the pledge, as steadied 'em both, tho' never total abstainers.

It wasn't afore she'd 'er third cup as Mrs. Trimley 'eld up 'er 'ead at all, and then werry downcast over soakin' of 'er crusts, and kep' on a-sayin' "Oh! as ever I should 'ave a son-in-law as 'ave took to the sea!"

I says, "Come, come," I says, "it might be wuss!"

"But," she says, "if there's war, there'll be press-gangs, and he'll be took for a dead certainty, and 'ave to steer the henemy into 'is native ile, and

be 'ung at the yardarm for a traitor, the same as Admiral Byng, at the Mutiny of the Nore.

"Oh!" I says, "don't be a-bringin' 'im up."

"Well," says she, "I like that from you, as is always a-bringin' things up, as I 'eard a party say the other day, as you did that woman as murdered 'er two children on Ludgate 'Ill, as would be forgot but for you."

"Well," I says, "that's public property, and we 'as all a right to our opinions over it; and I considers as them things didn't ought to be passed over and forgot like that, but did ought to be warnin's, jest like the chamber of 'orrors at Madam Tussors, as in course is kep' up ag'in the feelin's of a good many of them murderers' friends, as must put their feelin's in their pockets, and if they 'as relations as is give to murderin', must take the consequences, cos Madam Tussor ain't a-goin' to shut up 'er show, nor me 'old my tung, jest to please them."

"Oh," she says, "'ave it your own way, do; and now tell me for why there ain't no cause to fear the Merrykins."

"Well," I says, "I tell you for why. Because," I says, "it's only their fun, as in course none in their senses wouldn't never ask any one for to pay indirect damidges, as there would be no end to, and as to five 'undred million million, why, there ain't the money in the world, let alone the Bank of

England, where they keeps it like coals down in the cellars, and 'as sojers to mount guard over it every night, as they calls it the National Debt, cos if it were lost the nation would 'ave to pay it."

Says Mrs. Trimley, "Well, I 'ears as wot they've asked for they means to stick to."

"Well," I says, "let 'em stick to wot they likes; they'll never get it out of us, I'm sure; but I will say as them Merrykins is parties as 'ave werry sing'ler notions about 'em, for I well remembers when I was over there, and a-bordin' at Mrs. Skidmore's, as I'm partikler fond on, 'ow one or two went on, and partikler that German one as robbed the place that evenin', when they was all out but me and the gal."

Not as I minded bein' left alone, but I don't think as Old Nick could be up to their ways nor yet their confidence, for I do think as them Merrykins 'ave got the impidence of old 'Arry 'isself, as the sayin' is.

Not as he were a Merrykin as it turned out, but one of them beastly Germans as is a low lot; and to pretend as he made a mistake, and smellin' of onions enough to knock you down, when the gal opened the door to 'im, and I'm glad as I didn't see 'im afore I ketched 'old on 'im, for he was that filthy as would 'ave siled a pair of tongs to 'ave touched 'im with.

If I'd knowed at the time as he'd only robbed that old beast of a Downie, as lived at Mrs. Skidmore's, and sewed 'is money up in 'is pants, why, I shouldn't 'ave cared, as didn't ought to be encouraged in his goin's on, a miserly wretch as 'is good lady told me with 'er own lips, let 'is own son grow up bandy thro' a-begrudgin' 'im a set of irons in infancy, as would 'ave set 'is legs straight in a jiffey, as come 'ome to 'im in the long run, thro' that young man never bein' able to 'urry up and down a ladder, as was wanted in the paper-'angin' line.

But as I was a-sayin' when that gal Bridget come to my door with a tap jest on nine, and said as she were sure some one 'ad got into the 'ouse at the basement door with 'er 'avin' turned 'er back a instant to go for some milk; and couldn't take the key thro' 'avin' broke it in the lock the day afore, as was foolish thro' me bein' alone in the 'ouse, as would rather 'ave come down and let 'er in if it was twice as many stairs.

So I says to 'er, "Bridget," I says, "let's search the 'ouse then;" and so we did, but never found no westments of a thief nowheres, except Old Downie's clothes as was 'angin' behind the door, as I took for a man a-'idin'.

We was jest a-goin' out of the room ag'in satisfied, when I see a 'uman boot a-stickin' out from

under the bed, as I pints out to Bridget as pounced on it like a wulture, and drawed out the leg as belonged to it, and up jumps the feller as makes a bolt for the door.

I was too quick for 'im, and I got 'im by the throat, and pretty nigh shook the life out on 'im, but he give me a wiolent wrench and throwed me off that sudden as sent me a-spinnin' backards ag'in Bridget, and both on us went down with a crash like fireworks.

The feller he tried to wault over us like, but Bridget ketched 'im on the 'op by 'is coat-tails, as she 'eld on to as tight as waxwork, as the sayin' is.

So I says to 'er, "'Old on to 'im, that's a good gal," and rushes to the winder and screams fire as loud as ever I could.

The cry was took up in a instant, and jest then that feller 'ad got the gal by the throat, and I 'eard 'er gugglin' and splutteriu' ag'in the door-post, as is sure sigus of chokin'

So I rushes at 'im and ketched 'old of 'is back-'air as was werry long, and if he didn't turn on me like bulldogs, and pin me ag'in the wall with 'is knees; and thon Bridget, she flew at 'im, and at last together we forced 'im into what they calls a pautry, as is only a cupboard after all, and loeks the door on 'im.

Jest then there come a 'ammerin' at the door

as the gal run to answer, and if there wasn't the fire brigade, and a steam-ingin come a-tearin' up like mad to put us out.

I never see men more put out than they was in their tempers, and said as they wasn't goin' to be made fools on for nothink, and when I 'ollered over the stairs for some one to come and take that there thief, as was a-tryin' to break out of that closet, if they didn't say as I was ugly enough to frighten any thief, and walked themselves off.

But two perlice as was with 'em, soon come up, and when they let that chap out of the cupboard, if he didn't turn on me and say as I'd tore 'is clothes off 'is back, and as he was a respectable man, and 'ad come into the wrong 'ouse, thro' a-mistakin' the door with the latch-key, as proved true, not as I believe a word on it.

So I says to 'im, "Wherefore under the bed, my good man," as said he were only there because he didn't wish for to be seen.

Certingly there were not a thing touched in Old Downie's room, as come in jest then, as said he 'adn't nothing to loose, thro' bein' too poor a man for to fear bein' robbed, and believed that German, and begun a-layin' it all to me; and if that gal didn't turn ag'in me too, and if it 'adn't been as Mrs. Skidmore come in I do believe as they'd 'ave locked me up for givin' the fire-injin a false

alarm, so 'ad to give that German money for to 'ush up, 'is things bein' tore, as all as he'd got on 'is back wasn't worth five shilliu's; and if that Bridget didn't take and say as it were lucky as he were not a real murderer, as would certingly 'ave been 'er death; and as for me, I only stood by and see 'er throttled without a struggle.

Old Downie then takes and turns on me and says, "What business 'ave you got in my room; go along about your busyness, you meddlin' old bladder-'ead."

So I says to 'im, "I only 'opes, my gentleman, as you will be robbed some day, and see if ever I interferes; no, not if I was a-standin' by at the robber's elber."

So Mrs. Skidmore, as is a kind soul, she give that German a glass of carraway, as is a mess they're fond on, and he took 'isself off a-mutterin' all about me, as he'd be revenged agin me somo day.

It was jest a fortnight arter that, and a nice time I'd 'ad of it, thro' parties a-believin' that Bridget's lies about me a-leavin' 'er to be murdered defenceless, and the sneers as some on 'em was a-utterin' constant about me bein' hinglish courage, as certingly did put me out, not as ever I took any notice, and kep' myself to myself in my own room.

Well, I was a-settin' at my work that arternoon, when I 'eard old Downie a-'ollerin' and says to myself, "'Oller away, my fine feller, it'll do you good," and kep' on a-workin', when I 'eard 'im stamp and rave jest ag'in my door, so I gets up and opens it, and there he was a-lookin' like a copse.

I says to 'im, "What's the matter with you now?"

"Ah," he says, "I am plundered, robbed, ruined."

Well, 'is noise 'ad brought up Mrs. Skidmore and the others, and we all goes into the old man's room, and there was 'is drawers busted open, and all the things over the place.

So I says, "It's lucky as you 'adn't nothink of value, Mr. Downie."

He says, "You dry up, a-talkin' like that; I'd thousands there, and you was awares on it, with your confederit."

I says, "Me aware on it, never; why, you said as you was too poor to be robbed not a fortnight ago, that time as I collared that German in your room."

He says, "That's the man," and bolts out of the place like a flash of lightnin'.

So we all went downstairs, and back come Downie a-sayin' as he'd been in next door to see, as that German 'ad left the 'ouse a week ago.

"Well, then," I says, "he's in the neighbourhood, for I see 'im out of my winder yesterday."

"Go for the perlice," says Mrs. Skidmore.

"Send the gal," says Downie, as was a-tremblin' like jelly all over.

"Go for the perlice, Bridget," 'ollers Mrs. Skidmore, but there wasn't no Bridget to answer.

"Oh," says Mrs. Skidmore, "she's gone for some bread, I remember, but she's gone a long time for it."

So she was, for she never come back; and it's my opinion as she went off with that Dutch beast of a German, as was 'er 'complished, and all the fightin' was make believe what they 'ad in old Downie's room, as there weren't no trace of 'is property as was carried off.

As to ketchin' a thief in Merryker, you might as well 'ope to ketch a flea in a 'aystack; for it's such a size as they can get away from everybody easy, and no doubt 'ave jined the Mormons, as is a lawless lot out west, as they calls it, as is far beyond law or anythink else, as is a wild set of willins with fifty wives at a time, as would disgrace the Turks, as is to be escused for they don't know no better, the same as the brutes as perishes, and so them Mormons should, if I 'ad my way, the waggerbones, as did ought to be swep' away like rats or other hinsects, as is a downright pest.

So that evenin' I 'appens to say as I were sorry for that gal Bridget, as I do think meant well; tho' in course good intention don't go ag'in downright robbery, as there ain't no escuse for, partikler with a Dutchman; but as to old Downie, pity 'im, I can't say as I do, and I dare say he didn't loose much arter all, cos in course if he'd tell one lie he'd tell two, so he don't impose on me, as am to old a bird for to be caught with charf, as the sayin' is, and certingly 'onesty is the best policy all over the world, tho' it don't suit Merrykins to be told so, cos they takes it personal.

A nice row we 'ad over it at supper that night, and if the next day a feller didn't come in and say as he wanted to sec me about compensatin' Mr. Downie for 'is loss.

I says, "Wotever do you mean?"

"Why," he says, "look here; anyhow you're responsible, because, bein' on the same floor, you must 'ave 'eard that thief go into Mr. Downie's room; and, more than that, you were 'eard to say as you'd sce 'im robbed with pleasure, and not interfere."

I says, "Do you take me for a born fool, to dare to come 'ere and talk sich rubbish? But," I says, "it won't do; cos," I says, "thank goodness, I'm a British subjic', and you aint a-goin' to bully me; cos, if your President don't know what

law is, Queen Wictoria do, and she'll soon show you, if you don't take care."

He says, "There ain't no talkin' to a old flat-'ead like you; but," he says, "you'll 'ear more on it."

I says, "I can listen, but," I says, "remember as I can talk."

"Yes," he says, "that you can; and I shall set the lawyers at you." And out he goes.

But I never 'eard no more about it, nor old Downie neither, as left Mrs. Skidmore's; and I don't believe as the things as they took belongin' to 'im was wuth fifty dollars altogether, as ain't ten pounds, with all 'is 'owlin', and a-pretendin' to believe as I were in it.

So, arter that, I never should wonder at no Merrykin makin' claims, cos they're fond on it, partikler if it gives 'em a chance of blowin' about Bunker's 'Ill and George Washin'tub, as were their fust ringleader; but, law, I do believe it's only their way, and wot they calls tryin' of it on; and would be the fust to larf at John Bull for a old flat-'ead if we was so foolish as to pay 'em anythink.

"Yes," says Mrs. Trimley, as I don't believe 'ad paid arf attention to wot I'd been a-sayin'; "yes," says she, "but about Canader?"

"Why," I says, "if they moslests Canader by

marchin' in ag'in its will, why, we shall pretty soon put 'em out ag'in; that I know, for I've been there; as ain't no love lost between them and the Yankees, cos the Merrykins is jealous over our 'avin' got the best side of that big waterfall as they calls Niaggerer, and a wonderful size to be sure, as is like a 'orseshoe, as some considers lucky if picked up in the road."

"Law," says Mrs. Trimley, "the Merrykins wouldn't never go to war about sich a trifle as a 'orseshoe, as won't fetch but a farthing a pound to sell for old iron."

I says, "You're a-noddin' in your sleep, and 'ad better 'ave your forty winks right off, as 'll clear your 'ead, and you'll be able to understand wot I'm a-talkin' about better."

She says, a-startin' up with a suddin snort like, "Me been a-noddin'? Escuse me; it's you as 'ave 'ad a reg'lar good nap."

I says, "Mary Ann Trimley, don't talk foolishness; for 'owever could I be a-snorin' and a-talkin' to you about them claims at the same time?"

She says, "That's your busyness to answer, as 'ave been talkin' a deal of nonsense; and as to me bein' asleep, I wonders you can bring yourself to say sich a thing before my face."

I says, "Don't put yourself out, that's a good soul."

She says, "Who's put out?"

I says, "Why, you are, a-losin' of your temper."

She bounces up to put on 'er bonnet, as she'd left a-layin' on the sofy in the back parlour, and if there wasn't the cat and 'er two kittens a-layin' in the crown on it.

She ketches of it up, and in so doin' frightened that cat of ourn, as 'eld on for a minnit, and with 'er weight tore the back of the bonnet out.

I says, "Puss, 'ow dare you?" as know'd she'd been a-doin' wrong, and slunk away like any Christian under the sofy.

So says Mrs. Trimley, "Wot with you and your beastly cats, a nice time I've 'ad on it."

So I says, by way of jeerin', in fun, "All right," I says. "Send in your claims for it, and I'll give you compensation."

She bounced out of the place as if she'd been shot, and pretty nigh banged the door off the 'inges.

So in course I let 'er go thro' a-knowin' it were all 'er temper, cos I'd said as I could not ask 'er to stop supper thro' Brown bein' a-goin' to bring 'ome three friends, as I were a-goin' to leave the table myself as soon as ever I'd 'ad my bit, and leave them to their pipes; besides, as to Mrs. Trimley, Brown can't a-bear the sight of 'er, and calls 'er a w'inin' old cat, and a reg'lar sponge;

and certingly that she is, for she'll reg'lar live on any one as'll let 'er; so I'm thankful to them Allyblammer claims, as 'elped me to get rid on 'er that evenin', a old noosance.

She 'adn't been gone ten minnits when in comes Brown, and tells me about Queen Wictoria 'avin' been shot at.

It give me sich an orful turn, that I let the fryin'-pan drop slap out of my 'and, as were a-goin' to cook a lamb's fry myself for their supper, cos tho' I've got a good servant, I likes to 'ave a eye to things.

Says Brown, "'Old up, old gal, she ain't 'urt."

"Well," I says, "that's a mussy; but whoever dared to, as in course must be a Merrykin."

Says Brown, "'Ow you do go on! Why a Merrykin?"

"Why," I says, "for to get them Allyblammer claims out of 'er by foul means, as they can't get by fair."

I really were obligated to set down and get Brown to give me a little restorative corjial as I keeps by me, afore I could go on with flourin' that lamb's fry, as I trimbled over like a aspen leaf.

When Brown's friends come in, they said as this ere attack on the Queen weren't nothink worth makin' a fuss over, cos the pistol as the feller 'ad been and shot at 'er with weren't loaded.

For all that, I wasn't easy in my mind, not even in bed, and woke up once or twice in the night a-dreamiu' of Queen Wictoria bein' in danger, and me a-steppin' in to save 'er with my umbreller.

The werry next day I started early for Mrs. Padwick's, where I knowed I should see all the papers, cos she've got three lodgers, as two on 'em reads the "Times" and the other the "Mornin' Post," for the fashions, thro' bein' town traveller to a milliuery fitters.

It took me and Mrs. Padwick till dinner time for to read all about it, as in course were all rubbish, and reminded me of wot I've 'eard my dear mother talk about Margaret Nicholson, as tried to stab King George to the 'art with a fruit-knife; and I've see Oxford myself, as shot at Queen Wictoria both in Madame Tussor's and likewise Bedlam, when I went over it, as I 'ave 'eard say is now broke loose.

But, as I were a-sayin', wotever could them equerries, and John Brown, and the footmen, and the ladies-in-waitin', and the perlice be all about, as ain't got nothink to do but to look arter Her Most Gracious Majesty, and see as she don't come to no grief, and then to let a dirty young waggerbone of a ileman's 'prentis get near enuf for to take the liberty to 'old a pistol at 'er royal 'ead.

All as I've got to say is, as if I were Queen

Wictoria I'd sack the lot; and I should think as John Brown would go and 'ang 'isself with wexation.

I do 'ope as they didn't tell the Princess on it sudden, nor yet the Prince neither, as would throw 'im back, no doubt.

In course Queen Wictoria weren't frightened, thro' 'avin' of a clear conscience and a stout 'art; but that's no reason as any 'arf crazy blackguard should dare take sich a liberty as to give her sich a turn, as any one would feel with a pistol at your 'ead, tho' it only were loaded with a bit of red cloth, as any fool must know couldn't go off, yet 'ighly dangerous if showed to a bull, as is well known will drive 'im mad on the spot.

For all as I read in them papers, my mind were not easy about Queen Wictoria, so Mrs. Padwick says, "She's a-goin' back to Winser this werry 'arternoon, and let's go and see 'er."

"Law," I says, "no doubt she'd feel as we meant it attentive like, but in my opinion would be hintrudin' on 'er."

"Wot," she says, "to stand at the hend of the street, and see 'er go by to the railway."

"Oh!" I says, "that's a werry different thing to goin' all the way to Winser, and then find 'er not at 'ome to see us."

She says, "Martha, wot rum ideers you do get

in your 'ead, but," she says, "let's get ready, for she'll soon be a-passin'."

So I puts on my bonnet, and off we goes, and stopped at a corner jest close to 'Igh Park, where there was a lot more a-waitin' for to see 'er, all a-feelin' anxshus, no doubt.

We 'adn't not long to wait when some of them royal carridges come by, as I 'ollered 'ooray to, as was only full of the servints, as in course is all titled parties, as 'olds their 'eads werry 'igh, cos in course it's a 'oner to a duchess to be a dustin' of Queen Wictoria's bed-room, and then there's dukes a-cleanin' the plate, and lords 'as to wait at table, and ladies too for that matter.

At fust I thought as Queen Wictoria were in a shet-up carridge, a-settin' back so as not to be shot at agin, and that's why I 'ollered 'ooray, and waved my umbreller, as made a party say, "Escuse me mum, but you might be sent to the Tower for doin' less."

"Why," I says, "I can't do less than show my respects."

"Ah! but," she says, "the sight of that umbreller might startle 'er Majesty into thinkin' it a blunderbuster."

I says, "Bless 'er royal eyes, she's too clever, besides," I says, "she must know me by sight by this time, the same as I knows 'er, and knows

well as I wouldn't 'urt a 'air of 'er royal 'ead."

While we were a-talkin' the perlice begun to clear the way.

I says, "She's a-comin' now," and jest then a old man in a carridge come and drawed up jest in front of me.

"Well," I says, "that's manners." I says, "Go on, coachman."

Says the old feller, a-puttin' out 'is 'ead, as 'ad 'is 'air and miserable old whiskers all dyed furniture polish colour, "Stop 'ere."

Says the coachman, "I mustn't, sir."

Says the old feller, "Do as I tell you."

I says, "You're a reg'lar stoppin' my view, sir."

He says, "You be 'anged," leastways he said wuss, as is words I never will repeat.

So I says, "You're no gentleman."

Jest then up come a perliceman, and ordered 'im off.

I says, "Oh, perliceman, don't send 'im away, he wants the Queen to see 'im, as is that 'ansom as she might—who knows."

Every one burst out a-larfin' all round, and away the old feller were dragged, lookin' at me like thunder, and in a minnit or two by come the Queen, with all them Life Guards round 'er, leastways behind and before.

I was pleased to see 'er, as looked as fresh as a poppy, a-bowin' and a-smilin' all round, and that light-'arted, as much as to say as she 'adn't been neither frightened nor 'urt by that idjot and 'is old pistol.

I couldn't 'elp a-shakin' my umbreller at John Brown and them other equerries, as they calls 'em, and says, "I tell you wot it is, my fine fellers, if you don't look arter our Royal Mistress better, we shall 'ave to give you the sack, and find others as will."

Tho' in course, when I come to see the papers the next day, I could easy guess 'ow it all 'appened.

Cos in course John Brown couldn't get down out of that rumble in a 'urry, without 'is petticoats a-ketchin', so couldn't stop that boy from runnin' round the carridge, when he was a-'angin' by 'is kilt, and I do wonder as Queen Wictoria don't 'ave John Brown breeched proper, as is full old for to wear them fancy dresses now, as may be all werry well for children, or them as goes about among them Scotch hills, as she's so fond on, but don't do for town, except at a snuff-shop door, or pre'aps to pick up a 'onest penny, to amuse the children in the streets.

Then in course there would be a deal of confusion inside of the carridge, thro' Princo Arthur a-collarin' Prince Leopold by mistake, and them

two cquerries a-'ollerin' loud for the perlice, and a-givin' Lady Churchill in charge, and no doubt Queen Wictoria a-larfin' that 'arty as she couldn't speak for to set 'em right, as it's lucky the 'orses didn't take fright and bolt into the wash'us, nor nothink.

But it's all werry well to larf, as in course this 'ere miserable wretch of a boy ain't worth a second thought, but if he 'ad been a real sassin, like Louis Napoleon 'ave 'ad about 'im, why, for all the good as 'er lords-in-waitin' and John Browns and the others is worth, Queen Wictoria would 'ave been a dead woman afore she could say Jack Robinson, as the sayin' is, as never were looked arter proper, in my opinion, cos I well remembers the boy Jones, a young sweep, as got into the Pallis, and 'id 'isself under the sofy, and 'eard all as Queen Wictoria said a-orderin' dinner, and other state secrets, and nobody couldn't tell 'owever it got knowed all about wot she were a-goin' to 'ave, as well as wot she were a-goin' to do, and 'ow she give one or two of them lords and ladies a good talkin' to, over their bein' that wasteful, a-takin' of perkisites as they wasn't entitled to, and 'avin' too many follerers, and all manner like that, as in course she must look into, but didn't want it all put in the papers.

She couldn't tell 'ow ever them things leaked

out, and were a-goin' to send one or two to the Tower over it, when one arternoon she 'eard a snore close to 'er.

So she says to Lord Melbung as were Prime Minister, she says, "My Lord, I never says nothink when you falls asleep arter dinner, under my nose like, a-considerin' of your hage, but," she says, "when 'ere on busyness afore lunch, I espects you to be wide awake."

Says he, "May it please your Most Gracious Majesty it weren't me as snore, but I suspects the Lord Chancellor."

"Well," says she, "settle it among yourselves who it were, but all as I've got to say is, I won't 'ave it; why, one would think you was in Church; so the next as drops off in the middle of my Cabinet, I'll 'ave 'im took to the Tower on a stretcher."

You may be sure that woke 'em all up pretty quick, and made 'em look werry foolish, and jest then out come another snore as made the Queen start ag'in, and look round that orful at the lot.

So the Bishop of London he says, "Escuse me, your Majesty, but it must be your little dog as is under your royal sofy."

Up jumps the Queen, and stoops down and gives a look under that sofy, and there was the boy Jones a-snorin' like a pig.

In course she left the room while he were pulled

out, but, bless 'er royal 'art, wouldn't 'ave 'im put upon when she 'eard he were one of 'er own royal sweeps as is always about 'er, but 'ad 'im sent to sea arter he'd give 'is word of 'oner as a gentleman as he wouldn't never repeat a word as he'd 'eard, no more he never didn't.

I don't know what's become of 'im, as may be in the Admiralty now for wot I knows, not as it's likely, cos I'm told as them as is there don't know nothink about the sea thro' never 'avin' been there, and that's 'ow it is things is got in such a mess, all thro' one of the 'eads on 'em a-goin' for to study religion as 'ave been and 'rote a book to prove as there ain't no God, so no doubt they'll make 'im a bishop thro' 'im a-knowin' all about it, and can set all the others right as is a puzzliu' theirselves over alterin' the Bible, cos in course if ain't none on it true wotever is the use of alteriu' on it, they may as well give it up at once and do as they like, the same as the Mormons, as is wot we're all a-comin' to rapid with our Divorce Courts, and lettin' parties marry their grandmothers, as didn't use to be lawful when I were a gal.

I don't think, from wot I see on 'er, as Queen Wictoria minds a pistol bein' pinted at 'er any more than a pin's 'ead, as the sayin' is, thro' bein' that courageous, as in course is the British Lion all over, and you can see as she ain't the party to be

frightened by a miserable boy, as 'ave 'ad to face the 'ole British army afore now, a-firin' in 'Igh Pårk, with the Wolunteers throwed in; but that don't escuse them as 'ad to look arter 'er, as, in my opinion, 'as neglected their dooty, and it's a mussy as it's no wuss.

They do say as she've 'ad a misgivin' as somethink like that were a-goin' to 'appen over this 'ere Thanksgivin', but would go, as shows as she've got 'er 'art in the right place, or she'd never 'ave 'ad the pluck for to ride thro' ten millions of people, cos, tho' nearly every one there was ready to die for 'er, one wretch might have caused her death; but as I sed afore, if I were Queen, and my servants neglected me like that, I'd sack the lot.

But they knows werry well as she won't, thro' bein' that Gracious Majesty, and pre'aps I shouldn't neither, when they all fell down on their knees a-beggin' my pardon, as no doubt they all did the moment as she got in doors.

I didn't go back to Mrs. Padwick's no more, but got a bus to the Circus, and then one on to Bow, as knows me well, and parties in it that pleased when I told 'em all about me 'avin' seen Queen Wictoria, and 'er a-lookin' that well and 'appy; tho' I must say as I do think all the rest looked werry chopfallen, as pre'aps 'ave got a month's warnin'; and I see by the papers as Lady Churchill

got the sack on the spot, as went out of waitin', as they calls it, but in course means 'ad to walk 'er chalks, as no doubt were 'urtful to Queen Wictoria's feelin's to do; but she must make a esample of somebody, and I'm told as Lady Churchill did ought to 'ave knowed 'er place better, thro' 'avin' been used to the work so long.

I must say as I ain't pleased with that there coachman, and can't think wot he could 'ave been a-thinkin' about for to take the Queen in the back way; cos, if she'd gone in at the front door, why, no willin couldn't 'ave got over them 'igh railin's without the sentinels a-seein' of 'im, and would 'ave picked 'im off in a jiffey with the pints of their bagginets, as might 'ave 'urt 'is feelin's, but wot's that, compared to the Queen's life?

I do 'ope as they won't go and make a sort of a hero of that miserable critter, but give 'im a good sound whippin' in prison, and let 'im go back to 'is ile and colour line in the Boro', and not go a-sendin' 'im to the Tower thro' Traitor's Gate, as is jest wot he'll like; as a taste of the treadmill along with the cat would settle 'is 'ash, a impident young blackguard, to dare to 'ave a pen and ink in 'is pocket too. Why, I'd 'ave made 'im swaller 'em and 'is parchment too.

But I must say as I thinks as them fellers like our Dilkes is the parties to punish, as 'ave set poor

hignorant wretches a-thinkin' of darin' to behave in sich a way. But, law, after all, pre'aps it's best to despise them Dilkes, and Odgers, and all sich low-lived rubbish; tho' no doubt Mr. Gladstin will take and shet their mouths, as he did that Mr. Beales, by givin' 'em all good places; and if this 'ere boy, O'Connor, is 'arf sharp, he'll get made into a Minister, or somethink like that; and no doubt Odger 'll be a judge, and that there Dilke be made a peer; and so they'll go on, till all the roughs comes to live in Belgrave Square, and keep their carridges, and go to Queen Wictoria's Courts, and then they'll be friends with 'er, and not try to shoot 'er no more, and we shall all be 'appy, and go and dine along with the Prince of Wales and all the rest of the Royal Family.

Not but wot all these fellers is quite as good as that there Grabidaldi, as were made that fuss about in London by some foolish old Duchesses and other idjots, as little thought if he could 'ave 'is way, he'd 'ave sent 'em all to the scaffoldin', like the French Riverlution; as is only to be kep' down by brute force, as is all they're fit for.

Cos it's all werry fine to 'oller out for liberty, but when it comes 'ome to us we don't like it; and I'm sure Queen Wictoria is the werry last as would let any one take a liberty with 'er, as is where 'er and me is jest alike as tho' we was sisters, for I

never did 'old with them free ways, and never shan't to my dyin' day, as took and knocked a perliceman's front tooth out with my umbreller 'andle, as dared for to put 'is arm round my waist, a-pretendin' for to 'elp me across the road, as I'm sure is wot Queen Wictoria would 'ave done 'erself, even to the Dook of Wellin'ton if he'd 'ave dared to 'ave made that free, tho' he were a good sojer, and knowed 'is dooty too well for to take such a liberty, as is a word as he never could abear the sound on, and quite right too, in my opinion, as my motter is, "Paws off."

There's one good thing about this 'ere attempt, for it brought Mrs. Trimley to her senses, as come in when I got 'ome that werry same evenin' with 'er 'poligies, and a-dyin' to 'ear all the news.

"For," she says, "I'm told as he's a Fenian as 'ave done it, and that there's ten thousand more on 'em all ready, with their pistols full cock, as is always a-'angin' about the pallis; and some says as they've bought up the perlice, and is a-tryin' it on with the Army, and that's why they've been and put down a-buyin' of places in the Harmy, for fear as them willins should buy 'em all up, and then turn to and massacree all the Royal Family."

She were that agitated, as I 'ad to give 'er jest a toothful, as the sayin' is, for to quiet 'er, for she certingly do love 'er queen, and shed tears over

that lovely letter as a party 'ave rote in *The Times*, about Queen Wictoria at Temple Bar, as were that upset by the cheerin', as took 'er clean off 'er seat, and 'ad to ketch 'old of the Prince of Wales' 'and, and some say as 'er words wot she uttered was, "Albert Edward, why, you're a-settin' on the sandwiches," as he'd brought, cos in course he must take a little and often, as she well knowed, for to keep 'is strength up, and I do 'ope as they'll soon get 'im away for a thoro' change, as he must require.

I certingly never did see a woman take on wuss than Mrs. Trimley, as I 'ad to fetch my smellin' salts for, and then I says, "Come," I says, "cheer up, and let's 'ave a glass jest to drink to the Queen's 'ealth and 'appiness, and down with 'er enemies."

I'm sure if 'er enemies was down 'arf as quick as that glass of raw sperrits was down Mrs. Trimley's throat, they wouldn't trouble 'er much, and I only 'ope they won't go the wrong way, like that glassful, for she choked that wiolent that it was werry nigh all over with 'er.

When she come too, if she didn't 'ave the cheek to ask me what I meaut by tryin' to pison 'er.

I says, "Why, you've got murder on the brain, as the Yankees say. Who's been pisonin' of you?"

"Why," she says, "you with that wile sperrits, as is like a-swallowin' camphine."

I was struck all in 'eaps at them words, and ketches 'old of the bottle and puts it to my nose, and if the gal 'adn't been and brought me out the methelated sperrits out of the back parlour side-board, as belonged to a fottygraffer as lodged with me, and is the place were it ain't never kep', but put there in the 'urry of clearin' away the supper things the night afore, thro' me 'avin' forgot all about it, and only turned it out of the corner cupboard the day before.

I don't think as ever I were more frightened till the gal fetched in Mr. Brownson's assistant, as said it weren't no 'arm; but, bless you, Mrs. Trimley weren't to be pacified, not even when I 'ung out 'opes of tripe for supper, but went out of the 'ouse a-sobbin' like a child with it's 'art broke.

I took and emptied that beastly stuff down the sink with my own 'and, and never ag'in will I 'ave a drop of pison of no sort in the 'ouse, not if rats was to gnaw me in my bed, or blackbeedles to devour the 'ole pantry.

But as I were a-sayin', talk about Allyblammer claims bein' impidence, as they most certingly is, and only shows if you gives in to some parties, as they'll take the werry eyes out of your 'ead.

But as I were a-sayin', the wust of them Merrykins is, there's a lot on 'em ain't got their proper idejeers about morals, as they shows in their mar-

ridges, cos it's all werry fine for to persecute that old willin Brigin Young, but there's a-many jest as bad as 'im about their wives. I 'olds, as the man as don't respect 'is wife won't respect no one else, and that's why I don't 'old with them diworces, and got myself in nice 'ot water a-sayin' so when over there; for so I've said scores of times. Talk about the Mormonites, as we all knows is a waggerbone lot, I don't see much difference between them and lots of the Merrykins, as'll get married all of a 'urry, jest a-goin' afore a feller as they calls a justice, and a nice sort of justice, as the one I went afore didn't dare do nothink to them boys as fired at my bonnet, and might 'ave been my death, for fear as he might offend their fathers, as wouldn't wote for 'im next time; so in course they let's all the blackguards off as 'ave all got wotes and can choose their own justice.

As I was a-sayin', any of them justices can marry you, or even a alderman, as ain't no more like real aldermen, the same as I lived in the family on, than chalk's like cheese, and nobody wouldn't trust with a gold chain, I'm sure.

In course, them as is married like that don't think nothink serious about it, and that's 'ow it were as that young Kennedy got married to Julia Arpy; and there they was a-goin' about when I fust got over there, as lovin' as could be, as 'ad

only knowed one another a week at a hotel; and wotever was the end? why, in course, a diworce, as I considers downright disgraceful, partikler the third time; and so I said a-settin' down to supper one night at Mrs. Skidmore's, when out flies a Mrs. Thompson, as boarded there, and says, "Who cares what you considers?"

I says, "Why, them as ain't got no respect for theirselves in general don't care about bein' respected."

Mrs. Thompson she says, a-turnin' on me like ten thousand tigers, as I'd better dry up, and not insult their institutions.

I says, "I don't know nothink about your institutions, as may be werry good, the same as the Blind School and Layin-in 'ospitals, as is noble charities, as I ain't a word to say ag'in; but," I says, "as to a woman 'avin' two or three 'usbands a-livin' at the same time, I don't consider 'er no better than a outcast."

Brown, he says, "I wish as you'd keep yourself to yourself, Martha, a-talkin' about people's affairs."

I says, "Thank goodness, we're all respectable people 'ere."

Up jumps a Mrs. Lewis, as is 'arf-sister to Mrs. Thompson, as 'ad only come the night afore, and says as she wouldn't be insulted; and jest then

Mrs. Skidmore come in, as 'ad stepped into the kitchen for a instant, and says, "Wot's up?"

"Oh," says Mrs. Thompson, "here's this old Englishwoman a-insultin' us all round over our marridges."

I says, "Me insult you! why, I've never spoke a word ag'in any one but them as is diworced over and over ag'in, as I considers no better than——"

"Will you hold your row?" says Brown, a-gettin' furious.

"Oh," I says, "you're mighty touchy, you are, as pre'aps wants a diworce yourself;" and I bust out a-larfin'.

"I'm sure he'd show 'is taste if he did," says Mrs. Thompson.

But Brown he says, "I think as this subject 'ad best be dropped, ladies," and give me a wink; so nothink more wasn't said, but when we got up to our room if I didn't werry nigh drop, for Brown told me as both them women 'ad been diworced three times at the least.

"Well, then," I says, "in my opinion they're a couple of blackguards, and that's all about it."

Brown he says, "It's no busyness of yours, so keep your 'ead shut and your tongue within your teeth."

But, bless your soul, I 'ad raised that row as

there weren't no pacifyin' them two women, as said I must leave, or they would; but Mrs. Skidmore, she stood up for me, and as them two fieldmales hadn't got nowheres to go, they didn't leave; but I never spoke to neither on 'em no more.

There was plenty as did, partikler one party as were a member of the big church jest at the back of where we lived, and always a-goin' on about savin' some one, as in course was all werry right, only I didn't want none of 'is talk, as ain't my way of thinkin'.

Mrs. Skidmore she says to me, one day, as there was a-goin' to be a lecture there that werry night, as would be well worth 'earin', so I agreed for to go along with 'er.

Well, when we got there it was pretty full, and the party as were a-lecturin' 'ad begun, but he talked that thro' 'is nose, and kep' a-drawlin' out 'is words as I couldn't understand 'arf as he said; so seein' a bench near me as were empty, I goes and sets there.

I thought as he looked at me werry 'ard, and then begun a-goin' on about wanderers and lost sheep, and all that, as made me think as he were in the butcherin' line; but what he was a-talkin' about was Dutch to me; and then they all begun to sing, as was reg'lar 'owlin's, and nothing better.

Well, when that were over, that party as 'ad

been a-talkin' comes down and shakes 'ands with me, and says, "I'm glad to see you."

I says, "Sir," I says, "you're werry perlite."

He says, "Oh, it's my duty, and I considers it a privilege to welcome strangers."

"Oh," I says, "I feels quite at home."

He says, "Do you like our church?"

"Well," I says, "pretty well."

It was a ugly great barn of a place, as smelt 'ot and stifly.

He says, "Would you make up your mind to join us?"

I says, "What in."

A-thinkin' as they was pre'aps a-goin' 'ome to supper; not as they're much given to askin' you to no meals.

So, he says, "Oh, my friend, be converted, and join our church.

I says, "Go along with your rubbish, and don't bother me."

He says, "Oh, I feels a concern for you."

I says, "Don't bother me, I don't want to hear none of your talk."

He says, "Then why did you come and set on the inquirin' seats?"

I says, "They wasn't inquirin' for me."

He says, "Those seats are for them as wishes to inquire, as is thirstin' for knowledge."

"Well, then," I says, "in my opinion they'd better go somewheres as it is likely to be found in, for I'm sure you ain't got no knowledge to give away;" for of all the common hignorant fellers, why, he wasn't no more fit to teach anybody than a dog.

He was awful put out, and says, "I were a scorner;" and if them two creatures, Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Thompson wasn't there, and says to 'im as I was a unrenewed character.

"Well," I says to Mrs. Skidmore, "if he comes to character, I think them as lives in glass 'ouses did not ought to throw stones; and," I says, "if this is a renewed church, with half a dozen 'usbands to two wives, I'm glad I ain't renewed;" and out of the place I bounced.

Mrs. Skidmore she told me arterwards as they wasn't proud about sich things in them churches, as she knowed one of the elders, as they calls 'em, as was as big reprobates as ever lived, and one in 'er street as was a Sabbath school teacher and all manner, as 'is goin's on was downright infamous, but was a wessel thro' havin' two 'undred thousand dollars, as covers a multitude of sins, as the sayin' is.

Of all the turns out as ever you see, it's them churches of a Sunday when they're all dressed out, and little girls that figgers enuf to make a cat larf, with their fancy blue boots and flounces, and things up to their knees, and big gals dressed in

silks and all manner, as goes to teach Sunday schools, and spends all the day a-idlin' about, as don't know nothink themselves, and is only a escuse to show their clothes and gossip, as keeps the Sabbath with a 'ook, as the sayin' is; a bold set of 'usseys, a-larkin' and a-talkin' with the boys all the time; as is all werry natural, but did not ought to make a cloak of religion for, and wouldn't cook a dinner for the world, and calls all that dressin' out a-keepin' the Sabbath, as is enuf to make you sick, and no more religion that cats or dogs.

That's wot I calls a reg'lar Merrykin sham, as pretends as they're all well edicated, and don't know their duty to their fathers and mothers, and will sauce them like anythink, and have the last word, and go in and out when they pleases and idle about the streets, and nice misery comes of it.

But, bless you, they won't hear a word, and as to my Joe's wife, tho' she do 'ave them children taught to obey 'er, she's werry foolish in fust a-sayin' no and then a-givin' way to 'em, as I told 'er was foolish, but she answered me that short, as I made up my mind never to utter another syllabub, as the sayin' is; not as I can bear to see that eldest boy so mischievous, and never come when you calls 'im; so I've give it up, and never says a word, for in course a son's wife ain't your own dorter.

But talk about bein' civilized, with all that filth

and dirt as I never see anythink like all about the streets over there, as was that full of ice and snow, as laid like dunghills all the winter in the street, and made 'em that slippy as is as much as your life is worth; and I'm sure there's Montague Street, Brooklyn, as the side walks, as they calls 'em, is one everlastin' slide; and the parties as lives there that mean as they wouldn't pay a poor man a trifle to sweep away the snow, as they did ought to by law, but thro' bein' rich, in course nobody wouldn't dare to persecute them, and they do say as lots 'ave met their deaths with their backs broke, let alone arms and legs, as is trifles.

I'm sure the way as I come down a flight of steps a-comin' out of Mrs. Charney's door like a flash of lightnin', as were a-sayin' good night to 'er, and don't remember nothink till I was a-settin' in the middle of the pavement, and if there was one step there was nine or ten froze 'ard like glass, as Mrs. Charney 'ad cleaned down 'erself with salt and 'ot water, as froze all the 'arder.

I thought I was killed, and if I 'ad been, might 'ave brought a action agin the City for damages, as Brown said the boots was on the other legs, thro' me havin' split the pavement, as is certingly werry much broke all in front of Mrs. Charney's door, as he will 'ave it were my doin's; and as to bein' born black, I'm sure it's as well as anyone should be

as lives here, for you might soon be so thro' bruises.

As to Broadway, I'm sure no sandy desert can't be nothink to it, for it's ankle deep in snow, like a ploughed field, and the way them fellers drives is death and distraction, as takes a pleasure in it, I do believe, as it's my opinion is in with the coach-makers, and drives at a carridge for the purpose, and break the wheels into splinters, as I see 'em with my own eyes.

The way as they blocks up the pavement with their packages and barrels, and will let a bale of cotton come a-flyin' out at a door unawares, and knock you down like a nine-pin, and then use lang-widge to you as no lady didn't ought to listen to, let alone repeat.

The only ones as is decent in their manners is the negro blacks, as 'll give you a civil answer to a civil question, not as ever I asks no questions, for the way as I've been sent wrong thro' a-askin' 'ave quite cured me of askin', as I do believe as there's a many as sends you wrong for the purpose, as is a downright shame, the same as they did me that time as I asked a perliceman wherever I could get a little peppermint, thro' a feelin' dreadful crampy with the cold, enough to cut you in two, as told me to go in there, a-pintin' to a bookseller's shop, as 'ad wrote upon 'is winder, "If you don't see what you want,

ask for it." So I goes in, and says to the young man as were at a desk, as I'd take a little brandy and peppermint.

He bust out a-larfin' for all the world like a alligator a-showin' 'is teeth, and a werry grave old man as 'ad a goat's beard a-growin', comes out and asks, what is that? says he.

"Why," I says, "a little brandy and peppermint, as the perlice says you sells."

He give me such a look, and says, "Go away, you unfortunate old woman."

I says, "Who are you a-callin' unfortunate, as am only cold."

He says, "Go away this moment," and opens the door, and almost pushes me out into the street.

So I says, "I'll take your name and address for your impidence," and when I come to read, if it wasn't wrote up, "American Tract Society," as was next door to where it was wrote up as you was to ask for what you wanted, if not aperient to the naked eye, and if I 'adn't been and gone in at the wrong door, as is werry confusin' in Merryker.

There wasn't no reason why that perlice should call me such wile names when I told him as he'd sent me into the wrong place, and declare as I'd never spoke to 'im, as was a-standin' on the same spot when I come out as he 'ad been when I went in, and yet denied all knowledge of me, a-sayin' I

should get into trouble if caught a-goin' into places with false pretences, as is a thing as I wouldn't stoop to, nor never did; but it's no use a-talkin' to Merrykins, as don't know what reason is, in my opinion, and that's 'ow it is as they've come for to talk that foolishness over these 'ere claims.

Not in course as Queen Wictoria will give in to it any more than me, as never means to pay Mrs. Emmins seven shillin's for turnin' that coburg cloth of mine; seven shillin's, indeed; when she 'adn't even to find the pins for settin' it, and I kep' 'er all the time, as didn't come to work at it reg'lar, but odds and ends of time, and always come in about meal times, as I didn't notice, but is a incroachin' character like a many more, as is that greedy and impident, as will take advantage, and if you gives 'em a inch takes a ell, as the sayin' is; yet I'm sure we mustn't talk about Merrykin impidence without lookin' at 'ome, for I don't think as ever I did know anythink like the impidence of some parties now-a-days, as'll 'ave the cheek for to steal your property and then ask you for somethink for takin' it away; the same as that man served me, as come round a-buyin' old bottles, as I'd got the tool-'ouse more than 'arf full on, and was glad to think as I could sell 'em for anythink as they would fetch.

I see 'im thro' the winder pile 'em all up on a

truck, and were a-goin' off, so I steps to the door, and says, "You please to settle fust."

He says, "Settle wot?"

So I says "Why, thrippence a dozen, as you said you'd take 'em at."

He says, "Yes, thrippence for all on 'em as ain't starred, and all this lot is reg'lar broken, and not wuth tuppence the lot."

I says, "Then you jest take and put 'em back."

He says, "Shan't do nothink of the sort, and if you don't give me sixpence I won't take 'em away at all."

I says, "Leave 'em then."

He says, "All right then," and if he didn't take and leave go of the 'andle of the truck, as tipped right over, and all them bottles fell into the road and on to the pavement.

I says, "You good-for-nothink impident willin you," and if 'im and a boy as were with 'im didn't take and begin to smash 'em all over the place, and then bolted off with their truck, leavin' them bottles all strewed afore the door, jest as old Clarkson drawed up in 'is four-wheel shay, as is a retired carcass butcher next door, thro' the 'ouses bein' simmy-detached, as the sayin' is, with 'is old bundle of rags of a wife, and down goes the 'orse pretty nigh over them broken bottles, as 'ad got under 'is feet.

Of all the foul-mouthed old willins, it's that

Clarkson at the best of times, and when put out 'is langwidge is enuf to take the roof off the 'ouse, and bring a judgment on 'im, as may be 'is clump-foot, as you can 'ear all over the 'ouse, with 'im a-stumpin' about with no stair-carpets down.

As to 'is wife, I ain't spoke to 'er for months, ever since she throwed scaldin' water over our eat, for doin' nothink but set on 'er own dust-'ole and watch 'er pigeons, as I'm sure she's a deal too well fed to think on any more than turn up 'er nose at, the same as me whenever I ketches the old 'ussey's eye.

I weren't a-goin' to 'ave my eat's skin sealded off for nothink, so sent the old woman a notice as I'd indict 'er for a noosance over them pigeons, as was always a-pickin' away between our bricks, and might bring the 'ouse down any time jest for the sake of the 'air in the mortar as they wants to build with, tho' they 'ave got a 'ouse of their own like a tub on the top of a pole with 'oles in it, as shows as they're never satisfied, like the rest of the world, but was 'tieed away by some pigeon fanciers, no doubt as there's lots on down Bethnal Green way.

Not as I'm one to bear mallis, so went out to 'elp that old woman up as she lay a-wallerin' in them broken bottles, thro' 'avin' pitched out of the shay, and if that old willin of a 'usban' of 'ern

didn't stand up on the wheel and lay into me with 'is crutch stick.

The gal, a-seein' me that ill used, took and ketched up the broom as she'd brought out to sweep them bottles up with, and let drive at 'im with the 'airy end, as sent him back'ard out the other side.

It's lucky as our place ain't much of a thurrer-fare, or we should 'ave 'ad 'arf London round the door, and as it was there was over a dozen came up with a perliceman.

So in course I didn't want no row, and walks indoors, a-feelin' old Clarkson's stick down my back thro' my clothes. Tho' I 'opes no bruises wisible, as is always a eye sore, and looks like fightin', as I considers low-lived ways myself.

'Ow they got old Clarkson and 'is wife into the 'ouse I don't know, but the perlice took down my name and address, as the gal give 'im thro' the kitchen winder, as she open'd at the top jest as Mr. Brownson drawed up in 'is broom, as 'ad 'eard I'd been and pisoned myself while out on 'is rounds, and come all of a 'urry, a-thinkin' as it were a case for a post-mortal, as is always 'eld over a wiolent death.

'Is 'orse were werry nigh down over them broken bottles, so I 'ad to send for a man as come

and took 'em away by the basketful, as cost me eighteenpence, without the beer as I give 'im; as come back for more, and set 'arf foolish on the door-step till Brown come in, and threatened 'im with the perlice thro' bein' that abusive in his lang-widge.

I never see a man larf more than Brown over them bottles, but 'ad 'is larfture soon stopped when Mr. Brownson sent, a-beggin' of me to come to 'is place, cos he wanted me partikler, so I made sure as Brown's aunt were took a deal wuss, as we 'adn't spoke for years, and certingly did be'ave dreadful bad when 'er own sister died, as left us that seventy pounds as we never espected, and seemed to turn our luck like when the old lady went off suddin, as in my opinion wouldn't never 'ave 'ad hairysipilis set in, but for that werry sister of 'ern in the name of Mrs. Weldin bein' that pig-'eaded and would 'ave the boards washed under 'er bed, as would 'ave done werry well with jest the flue took up reg'lar with a damp flannin, but that woman weren't never 'appy without messin' and fussin' over something, and so I told 'er when the old lady were took wuss and 'ad 'ad the sweeps that werry mornin', as was no doubt necessary at times, with a fire day and night in 'er room, and bed-ridden over nine years, and 'ad been as fine a woman as you'd see in a day's walk, weighin'

over sixteen stone, and that shrunk as you could turn 'er in bed with one arm.

Not as I'd 'ave tried, for of all the tempers, and the blow as she'd ketch you with 'er ear-trumpet, as come down pretty sharp thro' bein' japan, as was as deaf as a post, but a eye like a needle for sharpness, but never a woman as I 'eld with any more than 'er sister, thro' bein' one of them 'ard unforgivin' naturs as there ain't no turnin.

I'm sure that Mrs. Weldin behaved like a brute to 'er own daughter, as certainly didn't ought to have gone off with the butcher-boy at nearly forty, as is years of discretion if ever you are to 'ave 'em, like your wisdom teeth, and is werry painful in comin' thro', but she died, tho' not in the course of nater, as I don't consider fire, when 'er fust were three weeks old, as didn't long surwive, tho' put out to nuss; and I follered 'em both, as lays in the Tower 'Amlets Simmetry.

Well, as I were a-sayin', Mr. Brownson sent for me and says "It's a bad business, and you must do the best you can." So I goes to the 'ouse as he sent me to, a-sayin' as he'd foller, as were a werry respectable widder as opened the door the colour of a sheet, and told me as she wouldn't never 'ave took 'er in but for Mr. Brownson, as the baby were born three days arter. She were gettin' about nicely, and a-settin' a-nussin' of it by

the fire, when the coal in the front bar blazed out suddin with a gassy flame, and ketched a cloth as were 'angin' over the fender, as is a thing I never would allow myself in a sick-room, as set 'er light dressin'-gown all of a flame in a instant.

She 'ad the presence of mind to throw the infant on the bed and run to the door a-screamin for 'elp, as came too late, for she were that burnt afore anyone could get to 'er, as to be a mask of cinders.

The moment Mr. Brownson come in, I says, "It ain't no use a-sendin' for me. Why, she's a dead woman."

"No doubt," says he; "but whoever is to take the hinfant?" He says, "Can't you for a day or two? as I'll send a nuss from the workus for in an hour."

I says, "Not into my 'ouse, thank you. I'm not a-goin' to 'ave no sich cattle darken my doors. But," I says, "why not send the poor little dear to Mrs. Brimble, as is the cow-keeper's widder, and left in werry narrer circumstances, and berried 'er own hinfant on Monday last, as only outlived its father a month."

"Well," he says, "will you manage it, and say as there ain't no questions to be asked, and the money's no object?"

So I sent for a cab, and took that poor little

creetur down to 'Ackney Marsh, where Mrs. Brimble were a-stoppin' with 'er mother, thro' 'er 'usban's brother 'avin' turned 'er out of the business.

She took the child thankful, and back I goes jest to see whether the mother were alive; but she'd been took jest about a 'our, and when I went to look at 'er, I thought I should 'ave dropped, for if it wasn't Mrs. Weldin's own dorter, as I'd remembered well as a gal, and married Archbut's the butcher's boy, as did used to gallop along the Bow Road without no 'at on, and a paunch in his sterrips.

So I says, "Whoever is to tell 'er mother?" So the woman of the 'ouse she says, "That's wot the doctor sent for you for to do."

I says, "Me? Why, we ain't spoke for years. But," I says, "I'll mention it to my good gentleman, and let Mr. Brownson know."

Brown didn't get in till jest about tea-time, and when I told 'im wot 'ad 'appened, he says, "Well, old gal, do as you like; but," he says, "mark my words, that old brimstone is sure to take it the wrong way."

"Well," I says, "that's not my fault if she does; so I'll go this werry evenin', and look in at Mrs. Padwick's for a bit of supper, as promised I would early."

So Brown said as he'd come too, not as he'd go

and see his aunt, cos, tho' one as will forgive, he can't abear no scenes, as he calls 'em.

It were close ag'in the Edgeware Road as Mrs. Weldin were a-livin', leastways lodgin', thro' 'avin' two rooms on the fust floor, over a gasfitter's, as were a tidy little 'ouse enuf; and one of the children opens the door, as told me to walk up.

Well, as there wasn't no one in the 'ouse to speak to but this child, up I walks, and taps at the door, and 'eard that old croakin' woice say, "Come in;" so in I walks.

She were a-settin' by the fire all of a 'eap, and looks up at me, not a-seemin' to know me, as were all 'er depth.

So I says, "Mrs. Weldin, you don't know me."

She says, "No, nor don't want to."

I says, "I'm Martha Brown, as married your own nephew."

She says, "Never 'eard of you, and don't want to."

"Well," I says, "I shouldn't never 'ave come near you but out of pity."

She says, "Pity? Nice pity! you 'as robbed me of my own sister's little bit of money, as did ought to 'ave come to me by rights."

I says, "Never mind that;" for we only got seventy pound, and she got pretty near two thou-

sand. But," I says, "I'm sorry to say I've got bad news for you."

She says, "I don't care about bad news nor good news. I've got no one in the world as I cares for."

I says, "Pre'aps not; but you 'ave 'ad."

She says, "No; for," she says, "as to that wile, base, bad-'arted dorter of mine——"

I says, "Stop! 'Old your tung, or you'll repent it to your dyiu' day."

She says, "Don't talk to me about 'er. Don't dare mention 'er name. I'll never see 'er again. Never."

I says, "That's true, never in this world."

She stared werry 'ard at me, and then she says, "Wot do you mean? Why do you look like that? It was all 'er fault; she disgraced 'erself."

I says, "Don't think of that now," I says, "for," I says, "if she've done wrong, she's gone to answer for it where you and me must both go."

She says, "You mean to say she's dead."

I says, "I do, and in a orful way."

She says, "Tell me all about it; set down, and let me 'ear. Don't look like that, Martha. Tell me 'ow she died."

So in course I did, and she set and listened like any one as is putrified, and when it were over, never shed a tear, but shook 'ands with me, and told me to go, but not angry, like.

As I were a-goin', she says, "Let me see you and Brown too, to-morrow."

So I went off to Mrs. Padwick's, and told Brown; and we did go that next day, and found the old lady werry low, as busted into tears when I told 'er we was a-goin' to follow the poor creatur to the grave that arternoou.

And so we did, and went back to tea with the old lady, as 'ad sent for 'er lawyer, and made a will in favour of that poor dear hinfant.

So good come out of a werry orful thing, and that upset me, as I were laid up for near three days, when Mrs. Brimble come to tell me as the hinfant 'ad died, so I sent 'er up to old Mrs. Weldin, as said, "It's all as well; let Mrs. Brown come and see me as soon as she can."

So the fust day as I were able to get out, I makes my way to see that hinfant laid with its mother, and goes on to Mrs. Weldin, as 'ad took to 'er bed the day arter I see 'er last, and only laid till the Sunday night, as I never left 'er, and Brown see 'er twice, but neither on us espected as she'd left us that bit of money, as were to be ours if the hinfant died.

I'm sure, when the lawyer read the will to us in 'is office, the day arter the funeral, you might 'ave knocked me down with a feather bed, as the sayin' is.

Well, all these things 'ad put them Allyblammer claims clean out of my 'ead, thro' 'avin' other fish to fry, as the sayin' is.

So I says to Brown, "I'm glad as them Merrykins 'ave been and give up that rubbish, as they was a-talkin' about makin' us pay 'em millions upon millions, all along of that Allyblammer."

He says, "Give it up! Wotever do you mean? Why, they're more on the rampage than ever."

"Wot," I says, "means for to summons us, like that old Mr. Twister did me, about doin' our drains, a old thief?"

"Well," he says, "they won't make no reduction, but," he says, "I 'ears as they've sent a werry civil answer."

"Ah," I says, "no doubt they'll try to carney us over; but fine words don't butter no parsnips, as the sayin' is; and in course Queen Wictoria, bein' a lady, will send a perlite message back, but they wou't never get the money."

"Well," says Brown, "we're a-waitin' for the anser."

"Ah!" I says, "and so is poor Mrs. Bromley from 'er 'usban' as went off and left 'er when upstairs with 'er sixth, a-promisin' as he'd rite as soon as ever he got over there, and send the money for 'er to foller, but, bless you, that's more than five year ago, and tho' she've rote over and over ag'in,

he's never so much as sent 'er the scrape of 'is pen, as the sayin' is, and there she used to sit at the winder, 'our arter 'our, a-watchin' for the postman, and often give 'im a-blowin' up for not bringin' 'er that letter, as I says to 'er, 'Owever can he, poor man, unless he was to take and rite you one 'isself, as would only be a-deceivin' of you.' "

But, law, Brown 'ad been asleep ever so long and didn't make no anser, as set me a-thinkin' over old McTwolter, as Mrs. Giddins recommended to me thro' a-goin' to 'er chapel, and bein' that serous as he never did nothink but groan and turn up 'is eyes.

I don't know as I ever should 'ave give 'im the job, for I aiu't fond of that sort, only them dratted rats 'ad been and undcrminded our washus, and growed that bold as to come and take the candle out of the bottle as the gal 'ad stuck it in, a-doin' a bit of washin' for 'erself, as isn't a thing I likes, but winks at partikler when out, and 'ad jest come in at the door thro' the latch key, when I 'eard 'er give a scream, and down I goes, but couldn't seo 'er thro' there bein' no gas in the washus, so 'ad to strike a lucifer sudden, and there she was a-sprawlin' on 'er back as flat as a pancake.

So I says, "Don't be a hidjot; why, one would think as it were a alleygator as you'd see, and not a rat;" but, bless you, them beasts 'ad been and

gnawed the kitchen clothes, and walked into the yaller soap as I always keeps on the top shelf of the cupboard next the fire for to dry it, and tho' I do believe as rats don't come not even to a dust-'ole without bones bein' throwed in, as is wot I never allows any more than a grease-pot as only leads to pilferin', and all as is wuth keepin' in the way of fat did ought to be fined down at once thro' bilin' water, and kep' covered over in the safe.

Well, them rats not only gnawed at things, but the 'eel of one of Brown's wusted stockin's and a 'ole in my flannin' under clothin' as you could put your fist thro'

So I says, "It's 'igh time as this should be looked into," and Mrs. Giddins bein' a-takin' tea along with me, recommended old McTwolter, as come and said as a 'odd of mortar and a dozen bricks would set it all right, and as he'd come in the werry next day follerin' and finish it up.

He come accordin', and were a-'umbuggin' about over two days, and always a-settin' down a-sayin' 'is 'ead were a-swimmin' thro' the drains, as obligated me for to offer 'im sperrits, as he lapped up like milk.

I paid 'im jest on nine shillin's for wot he done, and were thankful when his back were turned, as 'ad been and broke up about two dozen beer bottles

down them rat-'oles, as he said were enuf to turn a regiment.

Within the week I says to that gal, I says, "Whyever are you a-washin' your dishes in the back kitchen and not in the washus?"

She says, "Cos it's that overflooded, as I can't even stand there in your pattens, as you said I might wear to wash down the back stones."

I says, "Wotever do you mean?" and goes into the washus a-pushin' open the door all of a hurry and steps down into over my ankles of pools of water, as smelt faint like.

I really could 'ave given that young woman the broom 'andle across 'er back for not a-tellin' me sooner, for, bless you, the 'ouse were werry soon unbearable, thro' a 'eavy rain, as 'ad been a-comin' down for the last two days, and all the place flooded.

I wouldn't send for old M'Twolter, cos I 'ad enuf of 'im with 'is drains, but made the gal go for Mr. Twister as lives jest at the back, as were out, and 'is wife said she'd send 'im round the minnit as he come in, as weren't till nigh seven o'clock, and by that time, the 'ouse weren't bearable, and it's a mussy as he got a man to come, and 'elp 'im scrutinize them drains with a long pole and a sauce-pan as they bailed the water out with, and was at work till past eleven o'clock; and if that old thief of a M'Twolter 'adn't been and stopped up all the

drains, as he mistook for rat 'oles, and it's a mussy as we found it out or should 'ave all been as dead as mutton, as the sayin' is, with the gastrick fever, the same as that there Lord Londesborer give the Prince of Wales thro' 'is bad drains at Scarboro', and I'm sure if 'is drains give 'im 'arf the trouble and espence as 'ourn put me to, Lord Londesborer must 'ave 'ad 'is work cut out.

I'm sure our garden, back and front, were up for days, and jest like a grave afore our front door, as poor Mrs. Pulford pitched into a-pullin' me arter, that Thursday as I persuaded 'er to stop to supper, a-promisin' to see 'er into the bus myself, and so I did, leastways meant to; and when she got 'old of my arm, down at the wcrry bottom of the front steps, I says to 'er, "Now don't 'urry over this 'ere plank," as were laid over the 'ole, "but wait till I comes round the other side of you."

But jest as I let go on 'er, she seemed for to tread back'ards like, and up goes the plank like see-saw, she ketched 'old of me by the scruff of my neck, and falls into the 'ole with a yell, a-draggin' me on to the top of 'er.

It were jest a tight fit for me, as were afraid to struggle too wiolent for fear as I might squash 'er under me, let alone 'er bein' suffercated with my weight full on 'er.

That fool of a gal aggrawated me, for she

couldn't pull me out for larfin'; and I might be a-layin' stuck there now, but for the perlice and the potboy as got me out jest in time to save Mrs. Pulford's life, as were nearly black in the face, and didn't come to 'erself proper, though I kep' a-keepin' 'er up with stimylants, not till jest on two, and I 'ad to set up with 'er till close on seven, tho' she did turn on me and say, "as I'd been snorin' all night," and she might 'ave a fit thro' the fright as she'd 'ad.

I'm sure I were quite afraid as them drains would settle on my chest, and felt much 'urt at Brown for sayin' as there weren't much fear on it if sperrits was the cure, for we'd floored a bottle of brandy atween us, as I'm sure wasn't full when we set down to supper; but no doubt the perlice made free with it, likewise the potboy and the gal when I were a-gettin' Mrs. Pulford to bed, for it felt werry light when the gal brought it up to me, as only give Mrs. Pulford sips, and as to myself, only took mine in a bason of gruel jest to keep off the chill, the last thing, a-settin' in my easy-chair ag'in the fire, with a good book at my elber, in case I should feel inclined to dip into it, and that's why I knows as I couldn't 'ave slep', cos I kep' on a-sayin' to myself, I'll 'ave a look at that book in a minnit, as Mrs. Giddins 'ad lent me, thro' bein' tracts all about a dairymaid's dorter, as fell in love

with a shepherd of Salisbury Plain; and I do like for to improve my mind, as is better than a-settin' with your 'ands before you all night, or a runnin' down your naybors, as I've knowed parties do in settin' up, jest to keep theirselves wide awake.

Them drains werry nigh swallered up our cat, poor thing, thro' a-fallin' in with a lot of earth on the top on 'er, as made me werry nervous about a-goin' out into the back gardin, as proved a nice mantrap to that old man Richison, a good-for-nothink scamp, as kep' out till all 'ours of the night, and then got over our wall for to get into 'is gardin, as runs at the bottom of ours.

I'd gone to bed early, and were in a sound sleep, thro' 'avin' been up with Mrs. Pulford the night afore, when the gal come and woke me, and says, "Please, mum, I do believe as master's in the hagonies of death, a-swearin' horful close ag'in the back door."

I sets up in bed, and says, "Bless the gal, your master won't be 'ome for a week, I'm thankful to say."

"Well, then," she says, "it's thieves; for I never 'eard wuss langwidge, never."

I says, "Go along with you, as must be a-dreamin', for I'm sure you nor nobody else never 'eard your master use no foul langwidge, drains or no drains."

"Well," she says, "you come to the back door and listen, as is fast bolted, so he can't get at us."

Well, I 'uddles on jest a somethink, and drawed on Brown's boots, and down I goes with the gal, and sure enuf there was a man a-talkin' and a-groanin' all about 'is poor 'ead.

I says, "It's never your master, but a 'uman bein' for all that, as seems to be took bad, and may be Mrs. Charfin's father, as lives next door, as may 'ave fell out of winder a-walkin' in 'is sleep, as 'ave been bedridden these five years and more."

So I goes to the back parlor winder, as I throws up, and puts my 'ead out, and says, "Who's there?"

I 'eard a woice a-singin' "Arter as the Huprore is over."

I says, "If you don't stop your huprore, I'll send for the perlice."

Then I 'eard 'im, for it were a man, siug out as he'd been down among the coals, and must go and drown 'isself for the barber's dorter of Isliu'ton.

I says, "You may go and 'ang yourself for 'er, but I won't 'ave you makin' a noise 'ere all night;" and, jest then, the feller got on to 'is legs, aud who should it be but that feller Richison.

I says, "Go 'ome, you disgrace to your sect, do."

He says, "Hallo, Mother Brown; wot, moppy ag'in!"

I says, "Go 'ome, and don't insult respectable parties."

He says, "I can't get 'ome, for you've been and dug up your gardin as a trap, and I'll make you pay for it more 'evvier than the Allyblammer claims, if any 'arm comes to me."

It give me sich a turn, for I thought as he might break 'is neck down them drains, so I slips on Brown's great coat as he did used to wear for nightwork in the docks, so I opens the back door, and I goes out thro' 'avin' of my stockin's and carpet shoes on.

As soon as that young Richison saw me, he says, "'Ere's a lark."

I says, "Be quiet with you, do, and come thro' this way, and go 'ome."

But, law, he were as obstinate as any pig, and says, "No, I'll go this way," and makes a bolt for the gardin walk, as were all 'illocks.

I says, "You'll kill yourself."

He says, "It's my nearest way, and my old woman is a-settin'-up for me, and," he says, "do you know she 'ates you, and says she'll brain you some day if she ketches me a-darin' to talk to you."

I says, "Go 'ome with you, do," for I knowed as she were a brimstone, and a woman as I never spoke

to since she took and cut the clothes line as we'd fastened to the top of 'er wall, and let my best quilt and two large tablecloths down in the dirt.

So I says, "Get out of my gardin."

He says, "I won't."

I says, "I'll punish you for trespassin' if you don't."

He says, "'Ere goes," and if he didn't take and run down the gardin, and then I see 'im fall slap into the drain, thro' the moon as were on the wane, as the sayin' is.

I says, "He'll be killed. Come on, Susan Jane, and let's lift 'im out," for I 'eard 'im a-'ollerin' like mad.

Well, out we went at the back door, and me and the gal got to 'im, and managed to lift 'im up out of the 'ole, and got 'im up ag'in the wall at the bottom of our gardin.

He began a-larfin' and dancin' about like mad, a-layin' 'old of my 'ands, and a-sayin', "Oh! my eye, ain't you a pretty gal in your nightcap."

I didn't dare let go on 'im, for fear he should slip, so says, "Go on with your nonsense, and go 'ome to your wife."

I 'adn't 'ardly got the words out, wheu I 'eard a woice, "Oh! you good-for-nothink old faggit, to be up to your larks with my poor delikit 'usban', a-keepin' 'im out of 'is bed like this."

I looks up, and there were that Mrs. Richison a-lookin' over the wall, as must 'ave been a-standin' on the steps a-listenin'.

I says, "My good soul, don't stand there, as 'll ketch your death, tho' the weather is that mild for the time of year, but," I says, "do persuade your good gentleman to come in, even tho' it's over our wall."

She says, "I little thought it was you as kep' 'im out till this 'our."

I says, "Bless the woman; why, I've been roused out of my bed for fear as he should be drownded in our drains."

She says, "Oh! you wile wiper, you're a-tryin' to berry 'im as 'ave murdered 'im, like Mrs. Manuin'. Help, perlice, thieves," and 'er 'ead disappeared suddin, thro' the steps a-givin' way.

The winders of the naybours was all thrown up, and old Clarkson sprung a rattle as were 'eard down at Lime'us Reach, and two perlice come a-bundlin' over our wall.

Well, in course I soon esplained 'ow things was, but they says to me "As this is queer capers at nigh two in the mornin', Mrs. Brown."

"Yes, but," I says, "'owever can I 'elp a drunken feller a-gettin' over my wall, as is a-layin' 'ere like a druuken 'og."

They say, "Who is he," as knowed 'im as soon as I give the name, but 'ad to go and fetch a stretcher to take 'im 'ome, and it's lucky as I were ropped up as I were, or I should 'ave 'ad a orful chill.

I thought as I never should get warm ag'in, tho' I did 'ave a cup of tea, thro' 'avin' one of them shillin' kettles as biles over the gas, and got to sleep.

The next day in come Mr. Brownson jest on dinner-time, and says, "I'm sorry to 'ear about this."

I says "About wot?"

"Why," he says, "there's been a round robin signed by all the naybours to 'ave you removed under the Noosance Removal Act."

"What for?" I says.

"They say," says he, "wot with you and wot with your drains, there ain't no livin' near you."

I says, "Tell 'em with my compliments as they may go to law if they likes."

"But," he says, "it ain't true, is it, as you were a-dancin' of a reg'lar fandango in your back gardin with that man Richison, last night?"

I says, "Never in this world."

"Well," he says, "that's wot Mrs. Richison says, and old Clarkson and 'is wife says they see you at it long afore Mrs. Richison looked over

the wall and see you a-kickin' up a row with 'er 'usban'."

I says, "I do believe as the 'ole world is made up of lies; but," I says, "a clear conscience is its own accuser, as the sayin' is, and I'm not a party to be suspected of doin' 'rong thro' pullin' that feller out of the drain, as 'adn't no busyness to be a-trespassin'; and as to them as slanders me, tho' my naybours, they may go and 'ang theirselves; and if they wants to get rid on me they won't 'ave long to wait, as am a-goin' at Lady Day to the West End, and shouldn't 'ave 'ad this mess with the drains if it 'adn't been for the Prince of Wales, as we took warnin' by, as in course the consequences on may fall on the landlord."

He says, "Well, I shall be sorry to lose you as a patient; but," he says, "you will be more at 'ome at the West End, no doubt."

I says, "That I shall, thro' friends; but," I says, "not to forget the East—no never—as 'ave been a 'appy 'ome for me; and," I says, "as to my naybours 'ere, tho' in course I'm bound to love 'em, I'm sure I'll love 'em a deal more with a six-penny bus between us."

Well, Mr. Brownson he went off, and afore tea-time who should come 'ome but Brown 'isself; and when he see the drains all up he were dreadful put out, and then said as I'd been reg'lar 'umbugged

about 'em, and went off to the landlord, as sent and filled 'em all up the next day.

Old Twister he came round in a frightful rage, that same evenin', a-demandin' two pounds ten, and a-sayin' all manner, as I would not open the door to, but told 'im to go to the County Court thro' the kitchen winder, as sent me the summons afore the next day were out.

Brown's a-goin' to pay the money into court, cos he says there ain't no use 'avin' a row over it, as I give the order.

I really do not know where we're a-goin' to, or wot we're a-comin' to, unless it is Merryker, where you can't get no justice; for never shall I forget, when we was over there, the row as we 'ad one Thanksgivin' Day, as they calls it—and wot-ever they've got to be thankful for I can't think; not as it's a thanksgivin' like Queen Wictoria a-goin' to St. Paul's, cos they ain't got no Queen, nor yet a St. Paul's for 'er to go to, if she wanted to give thanks ever so much; but it's a annular thing with them, and a nice row they makes over it, and all eats turkeys and cranberry sarce, as I don't care for; but, as I says to Mrs. Baycroft, "Every one to their fancy, as the old woman said when she kissed 'er cow."

I don't think as ever I should 'ave thought on it ag'in, if it 'adn't been for this 'ere Allyblammer

claims a-comin' right on the top of our Thanksgivin', as I'm sure we did ought to 'ave hevery year, to think as we ain't born Merrykins; not but wot I loves Mrs. Skidmore like a sister, but she can't 'elp them a-beiu' on the constant rampage.

I wish I 'adn't promised to speud that Thanksgivin' along with that Mrs. Baycroft, but my word is my bond, so started early and got there in good time, for it's a reg'lar 'olliday, and kep' like our Christmas-day, tho', as I said afore, I never could make out why or wherefore, as the sayin' is.

When I got to Mrs. Baycroft's, as lives up in Seventy-fifth Avenue, Nine 'undred and Ninety Street, as I can swear she told me were 'er address, as made them carmen, as stands a-waitin' to start by the City 'All, all bust out a-larfin' iu my face, as is a unpleasant 'abit, partikler when all are a-chewin' tobaccer, as they squirts all about.

I never see sich people to chew, as is either baccy or candy, or else they must pick at hen nuts, and if they can't get nothink else 'as a turn at their nails, as is all their worretin' ways.

In course, I never found Mrs. Baycroft, as there wasn't no sich aveuue nor street iu the world; but as I were a-goin' back 'ome I jest stepped in to see Joe's wife's aunt, and never did see a woman a-goin' on at a turkey like that a-tryin' to truss it, as she and 'er gal were a-tuggin' at like wild.

"So," I says, "you'll pull 'im in 'arf."

"Oh!" she says, "you dry up, as don't know your back 'air from a brick wall."

So I set quiet till I see 'er throw that turkey's 'ead to the cat, and then I says, "Don't you never use them giblets?"

She says, "Oh! no, none of your English mean ways for us, we always throws the offal away; tho' no doubt it's good enuf for you."

I says, "I wishes you a good mornin', mum, as am sorry I intruded."

"Oh!" she says, "never mind; I'll forgive you this time if you promise never to do it ag'in."

So in course I walked out, and thought I never should 'ave got 'ome, for the crowds as I met a-comin' along, with a lot of waggerbones all dressed out on 'orseback, as was a-goin' to fire at a lot of dead pigs as they'd got in a cart.

I says, "Wot are they for?" to a party as were a-standin' by me.

She says, "Oh! to shoot at."

"Well," I says, "that is a Yankee way to fire at a dead pig," a-speakin' jest for fun.

Law, if that woman didn't take and turn on me, and called me a bloated Old Britisher, and set the crowd on me.

So I says to a perliceman as come up, I says, "Protect me ag'in these roughs."

He says, "Look here, if you goes a-callin' parties roughs you'll get the wust on it; so," he says, "where are you a-goin' to?"

I says, "Flatbush Avenue, and wants a car."

Well then he says, "Here's one a-comin', so 'urry up and get 'ome, or you'll end bad, you will."

He tumbled me into the car, and 'ome I got, and never showed my nose out of my room no more that day, and that good soul Mrs. Skidmore brought me up some tea and a bit of turkey, and says, "It's jest as well as you're up here, for there's one or two downstairs as is werry much ag'in all the British, all about the Allyblammer," as were the fust time as ever I 'eard it mentioned over in Merryker, and didn't know wot they meant, never a-dreamin' as it would turn up ag'in in Hingland.

I'm sure I went to my bed thankful that night as I 'adn't got into no dangers, and anyone as lives over there did ought to be thankful as they comes safe thro' a day without bein' dashed to bits, for of all the drivin' and shovin' people as ever I see, them Yankees beats 'em. Talk of Rushins, why, they must be fools to 'em.

I can't think 'ow anyone ever comes to a quiet end or dies peaceful in their beds, for they seems to me to be all a-tryin' to bust theirselves one way or the other.

In course I didn't 'ave no words with them

more than I could 'elp, but it's all rubbish about Allyblammer or any other claims; the truth is they 'ates us, and can't abear to think as they was obligated to give up them two parties in the name of Slider and Masin, as were aboard a British wessel, and they took and seized 'em. That's the real place where the shoe pinches, as that there Lincoln, as were shot, poor man, would 'ave gone to war about them, only they was fightin' the South at the time, so he says, "One war at a time."

But, law bless the people, whyever should they want to fight and quarrel. I'm sure we don't want to, and why should they? But they've got a fancy as we looks down on 'em, and that's wot they can't abear; but, as I says to a young lady as set next me at table one day, I says, "My dear young lady," as asked me if we didn't 'ate 'em, "we don't 'ardly ever give you a thought, and when you're nice and pleasant, why, in course we likes you werry much better than any other forriners, cos we can understand you though you speaks singler like."

She larfed a good deal, and says to me, "Well—my—do tell; I never did 'ear anyone talk like you."

I says, "My dear, I am London bred and born, so in course speaks English jest like Queen Wictoria 'erself."

She bust out a-larfin', and says, "So I should

think;" as she didn't mean rude, but that's their way. They ain't got them manners not like wot we calls genteel, but none the wuss for that if the 'art's in the right place, as some on 'em 'ave got it anyhow, as I knows myself thro' 'earin' the way as they be'aved to a poor widder as were left with eight, thro' the 'usban' a-dyin', as 'ad come out for a missionary from Ingland under a cloud, as the sayin' is, by some of them religions, I think, as I don't know the name on; but, any'ow, he were a bad lot, and 'ad to cut and run, and she'd been and follered 'im with all the little ones, as he were werry much took aback by them all a-turnin' up on 'im sudden, as were a-lodgin' jest oppersite Mrs. Skidmore, and I know'd 'em for Inglish the moment I see 'em in a sort of a cart at the door, poor things, that bitter day in February as they landed blue with cold.

So I got Mrs. Skidmore for to ask, as found out all about 'em, cos Merrykins will talk, and found as they was dreadful bad off, with 'ardly nothink but wot they'd got on their backs, and 'im a-doin' nothink.

It wasn't no sooner knowed as they was that sitiwated, as were talked over at supper, than hevery one come down with somethink for them, till I 'ad a reg'lar 'andful of dollar bills, and some five and

ten, cos it were agreed as I should take it to 'em, thro' bein' their own country.

It did my 'art good for to see 'ow kind all them Merrykins was as couldn't 'ave been more warm-'arted if they'd been Irish bred and born.

I went over to see that poor woman as was a-settin' on a box, thro' the few chairs as were in 'er 'usban's room bein' took up with them children.

So I says, "You'll excuse me, mum, thro' bein' a stranger a-intrudin', but 'earin' as you was jest arrived, I made bold for to step over to see if we could be of any use."

She stared at me, and says "'Ave you come from the parish?"

I says, "Law bless you, there ain't no parishes 'ere, but," I says, "plenty of 'elp for the poor, as never was kinder 'arts than the Merrykins."

She says, "I'm glad to 'ear it, for," she says, "I shall 'ave to prove it, as am destitute."

She didn't bust out eryin', but 'er eldest gal did, as were about twelve, and nussin' the babby.

So I says to 'er, "Come, my dear, you mustn't give way, but 'elp your mother, that's a good gal;" that poor child sobbed fit to break 'er 'art, as set all the others off.

So I says, "Oh! this won't never do."

Says the poor mother, "They're worn out, we've 'ad a dreadful time aboard ship."

"Well," I says, "that's over, and now you must 'ope for better days."

She shook 'er 'ead and pinted to the bed.

I says, "Not sickness, I 'opes."

She got up and went to that bed and drawed the curtings, and there was a man a-layin' there, as I see were the 'and of death on 'im.

I says, "My goodness me, 'ow come this to 'appen."

She says, "I don't know, the people of the 'ouse tells me he 'as been ill about three weeks."

I didn't say nothink, but saw as it was gallopin' consumption, as drink 'ad brought on, cos we'd 'eard of 'is goin's on, as wasn't respectable in a missionary to be under liquor all the time.

I went to see the party as kep' the 'ouse, as said she really could not afford to take them in, thro' bein' a poor widder 'erself.

So I says, "In course not, my good soul," for she spoke werry kind about lowerin' of 'er terms, "but," I says, "you shall be paid, only let them have another room or two;" and so she did, and got them poor children undressed and to bed, arter some broth to warm 'em.

As to the poor mother, she wouldn't take nothink but a cup of tea, as wasn't like England, she said.

As to 'er 'usband, he'd been that knocked over at seein' 'em all round 'im, that he were reg'lar done for, and couldn't take nothink but a little brandy.

I made 'is poor wife go to bed along with the children, and promised I'd set and watch 'im, as kep a-dozin', and I see there weren't no 'opes on, tho' she didn't seem to take it in like.

I think it must 'ave been about twelve when he woke up sudden, and says to me. "I must go out."

I says, "Not till mornin, my dear sir."

"Yes," he says, "the ship is in, and I must go and meet 'em."

So seein' as 'is head were wanderin', I only says "All right; you shall meet 'em all in the mornin'."

Well, that seemed to pacify 'im, and he were quiet for a bit.

So I says, "Would you like to see your good lady?"

He says, "No; 'ow can I look at 'er sweet sufferin' face and all the children, the wicked 'retch that I 'ave been."

I says, "She is waitin' to see you, shall I fetch 'er?"

He says, "Not for the world. She was good and true, and believed me, a miserablo, lyin' hypo-

crite. I took 'er from a good 'ome to bring 'er to poverty, disgrace, and ruin."

I says, "She forgives you if you 'ave, as I 'opes ain't so bad as all that."

He says, "Who are you? oh! I remember, the old woman as they all larfs at over the way."

I see 'is 'ead were light and full of fancy, cos I'm sure no one ever larfed at me, so I says, "Oh! yes, I live over the way, but," I says, "you're good lady is 'ere and you'd like to see 'er, wouldn't you?"

He says, "Yes, if I could 'ear 'er say, 'Philip, I forgive you,' I should die 'appy, cos," he says, "I've made my peace with God, and now all I want is to see my wife, poor dear injured one."

I didn't say another word, but went to 'er room and opened the door gently, for fear of disturbin' 'er suddin, but she wasn't even in bed, but on 'er knees at 'er prayers.

I touched 'er werry gently, as made 'er start up, and says to 'er, "Put on your shawl and go to 'im, I'll mind them 'ere."

She went out of the room like lightnin', and there I set a-watchin' them poor little things as was off as sound as tops, as the sayin' is; for near 'arf a 'our, when I 'eard 'er open the next room door, and a call, so I 'urries to 'er, and she says "Send for a doctor, pray send directly."

I says, "Let me look at 'im," and goes up to

the bed, and see as no doctors could do 'im no good, he was gone far beyond them.

So I took 'er 'and, and says, "My good soul, be thankful as you've been allowed to see 'im once more in this world, as he've gone from for ever."

She didn't say a word, but set down by the bedside, and took 'is 'and in 'ern, and says to me, "He could not 'ave been a vile deceiver, could he?"

I says, "Never mind wot he was, and wot he wasn't, he's the father of your children, and died with askin' mercy on 'is lips, and no one can't do more than that, so," I says, "bear up for them poor children's sakes, and do your dooty by 'em."

When I mentioned them children, she bust out a-cryin', and ran into 'em.

I didn't foller, in course, but called up the woman of the 'ouse, as 'ad a Irish servant, leastways a 'elp—as were as kind over it as if it 'ad been 'er own brother.

As soon as ever it were light, I went over to the chapel and fetched the priest, as 'ad come to see the poor feller many times a day or two afore his death, but only said as he knowed werry little about 'im.

That priest were a werry poor man, and lived along with the bishop, as 'ad about as much money as a church mouse, as the sayin' is, but they was all werry kind to that poor widder.

In course, it's a bishop's duty to be kind and

good to the poor; but I were took aback at all them Merrykins' kindness, for they got enuf money, not only to berry 'im werry decent, but to send 'er and the children 'ome when the weather broke a little, and kep' her in comfort all the time she were there. So don't let any one tell me as Merrykins ain't generous, cos I won't hear it said.

The night afore she sailed, that poor thing told me 'er story, as were werry sad; for if that 'usban' of 'ern 'adn't been a Catholic priest as turned Protestant, and got 'er to turn too, as 'ad been brought up that way 'erself.

But some'ow he never could settle down quiet, and at last took to drinkin', and come out to Merryker, and, when there, rote 'er word as he never could see 'er ag'in.

So she weren't a-goin' to stand that, cos, in course, priest or no priest, he were 'er 'usban'; so she rote 'im word as she were a-comin', and he rote back word as she might if she didn't mind facin' misery.

So, like a true woman, she come, and told me as it were all thro' that bishop as 'er 'usban' 'ad sent for 'er; but she said it were all to be kep' secret till she were gone, so in course I never said a word to no one, nor never mentioned the name, cos he'd gone by a false name 'isself; and went down to the dock to see 'em off, as were a-goin'

back to 'er father, as 'ad forgive 'er, and 'opes I may see 'er ag'in some day, poor soul, as I'm sure won't never forget the Merrykins, nor yet their kindness to 'er and 'ern; cos it wasn't the Catholics only as 'elped 'er, but all the others as didn't mind 'er religion not a bit, no more than if she'd been nothink at all.

I were a-waitin' all last week for to 'ear all about that Merrykin anser, when Brown come in to tea, and says, "Well, old gal, you're right arter all."

I says, "Wot about?"

He says, "Why, about that there Tichbung, as they've been and throwed 'im over."

I says, "I 'opes not the little boy and 'is ma, as is sich a nice lady?"

"No," he says; "the Claimint."

I says, "I am glad. But wotever will they do with the willin? as did ought to be 'ung, drawed, and quartered, like Queen Lizzybeth would 'ave 'ad 'im; as, with all 'er faults, didn't like any one to be a bigger willin than 'erself."

"Ah!" says Brown, "we shall see about that, but must wait for the papers."

"Well," I says, "he did ought to be punished, if it were only for givin' a party as 'ad done 'im a favour some red port wine, as he said 'ad been 1851 years in bottle, as werry nigh pisoned the 'ole family, as were too bad to be even give to the poor;

as if any wine could keep good all them sentries, as is afore sellers was inwented, or even the Christian Airey, as the sayin' is."

For my part, I don't 'old with wine bein' kep' all that time; the same as Alderman Wittles 'ad some in 'is cellar with a yaller seal, as the butler give me 'arf a glass on once, as I'd as lief drink blackin' myself, as likes the little as I do take to be good of its kind, if only rum srub, as is a 'armless drink, tho' I considers it bilious if took on a empty stomick too early.

I don't think as ever I did take them Merrykin questions to 'art like, till Mrs. Archbut come in to tea at Mrs. Padwick's, and says as the army and navy were a-goin' to be all drawed out along the coast with the militier, and as Parlyment 'ad been and woted lots of money for all, let alone the wolunteers, as don't get paid nothink we all knows, but as good sojers as tho' they 'ad a ginny a day like them jury in the Tichbung case, as I'm sure is little enuf, and I'd a deal sooner be a wolunteer, as is always wuth three press men any day, as the sayin' is.

So I says, "But wotever are they all a-bein' drawed up for?"

So she says, "Why, bless you, the werry moment as the anser comes about them claims, if it ain't civil every Merrykin in England will be sent to the Tower."

"Law," I says, "wot for? they can't 'elp it."

"Ah," she says, "that don't matter, but must take the consequence of their sitivations as is Merrykin."

I says, "I don't believe as ever Queen Wictoria would do it, as is too much the lady for to take sich a mean adwantage of any one's misfortunes, as can't 'elp it, poor things."

"Oh!" she says, "all is fair in love and war."

"Well," I says, "if there ain't much love lost atween us, there ain't no occasions for war."

"But," she says, "we can't settle it without."

I says, "Settle wot?"

"Why," she says, "these claims as is that sum of money as would ruin us if we was to pay it, so may as well fight for it."

I says, "That ain't no way to settle things justly;" I says, "if we owes the money, in course we must pay it, like the French 'ave the Germans, tho' it 'ave gone ag'in the grain."

She says, "The Germans reg'lar conkered the French, as 'ad to knock under, as we're not a-goin' to do to the Merrykins."

I says, "of course not; but," I says, "the Merrykins can't jest come over a bridge like the Germans, and conker us; but," I says, "it's ten days at the werry least, and sometimes twelve, to come across from Merryker, tho' I did 'ear as the Rooshuns did it in eight; so," I says, "we can be

ready for 'em; not as it will ever come to that, cos if the Merrykins was to begin to fight us, they'd 'ave their troubles at home break out ag'in; besides," I says, "in course they must listen to reason."

"Ah!" says Mrs. Padwick, a-chimin' in, "that's wot we 'oped for, and that's why we asked all them forrin kings and parties for to interfere for us."

I says, "The more fools us, as don't want no forriners a-interferin', not as if we couldn't understand one another; but there ain't all that difference atween Merrykin and Inglish, partikler when it's rote out so as not to be understood."

"Well," she says, "any'ow they ain't understood wot we rote, and 'ave been and put a rong meanin' on it."

I says, "I'll lay a wager as that's because some of them as speaks werry bad thro' their noses 'ave 'ad it give 'em to read out loud, and 'as misled the others."

Says Mrs. Archbut, "That ain't no reason, cos they speak thro' their noses as we should pay thro' ours;" as I considered a werry poor joke, so wouldn't even smile at it, as put 'er out.

So she ups and says, "Well, if the Hemperor of Proosher and King of Hitaly can't settle it for us, pre'aps you can, Mrs. Brown."

"Well," I says, "I've got my notions, as may be right and may be wrong, but are my own all the

same; and as to that Hemperor of Proosher and King of Hitaly, they're a nice pair for a curricole, as the sayin' is, as 'ave been and robbed their naybours right and left of heverythink all round; they must be two good uns to say wot's fair; why, I'd as soon set that Grabidaldi to take care of a church, or trust the cat with the cream jug."

"Well," says Mrs. Padwick, "we can't tell nothink till we gets the anser in black and white."

"Well," I says, "wot's made the row, if we ain't got a anser, yet."

"Why," says Mrs. Archbut, "they've been and telegraffed a lot of ansers."

I says, "We ain't a-goin' to war over a telegraff, as may be all wrong, the same as I've knowed it go, thro' a-sendin' one myself, as never won't trust it no more, not even in life and death, as is only 'lectricity, arter all, and often gives you a wiolent shock for nothink, and can't get there in time."

Says Mrs. Archbut, "Oh, it's a wonderful discovery as did ought to be mortalized."

"Well," I says, "in course I can't say as it ain't; but it's all werry fine for to talk about 'lectricity, as we all knows is a wonderful thing, as you may see for yourself any day at the Pollytecnick, where they keeps on a-lettin' of it off constant."

But never 'ad such a shock in my life as when, years ago, I went to see some speriments; a-settin'

there in the dissolving views, as can't be seen but in the dark, a party cut my redicule open, and let everythink out, as I were not aware on for ever so long, thro' a-restin' it on the seat, or must 'ave felt 'em, for it weighed that 'eavy thro' bein' full, as must 'ave knowed the differcnce when the bottom were out and everythink a-layin' about, all over the place, escept my moleskin purse, as were stole with a Queen Anne's guinea in it, and a silver pocket piece of King George's, as 'ad both belonged to my own grandmother, as were a corn-cutter on my father's side, and inwented a wonderful pill, as 'ave gave relief to thousands, and did ought to 'ave rode in 'er coach and six, and would 'ave all but for a coroner's inquest as brought 'er in man-slaughter, thro' a overdose of soothin' serrip, as a table spoon was of course too much for a infant to swoller under the month, as the monthly nuss give 'er in the night, and never woke ag'in, but no more manslaughter than I'm a Dutchman, for it was a gal arter all, as shows what a deal juries knows about it.

I was wexed about that redicule, and partikler over my silver fruit-knife, with a mother o' pearl 'andle, and my silver thimble, as they'd been and even took, along with my little flat bottle, as were full to the brim, but left the hegg-cup, as I 'ave used to drink out on, and my ussiff with a nutmeg,

and a cramp bone as I always carries about, and a comb and brush, thro' a-meanin' to stop all night, and 'ad sent my other things by the parcels delivery.

I thought I should 'ave dropped when they turned up the gas and I see my property layin' all about, and 'ollers "Perlice," as brought in some parties as said they'd see about it.

I says, "See about it? why, whatever's the use of that," I says, "if you must show things in the dark, like the galanty show, as I well remembers when a gal, as my dear mother always would 'ave it took all the 'ats and coats out of the 'all, as were 'elpin' at a evenin' party at Christmas time, why," I says, "you did ought to see as the parties as you lets in is respectable, as I'm sure them as was behind me wasn't, as I could tell by their goin's on."

So never 'ave fancied that 'lcctricity, nor them magic lantern ways, and when old Mrs. Letherbridge come in all of a sudden, as 'ad Mrs. Padwick's first floor two year ago, and said as she must telegraft to Letherbridge, down to Liverpool, a-goin' to Canada, as the wessel 'ad put back to Plymouth, and all the family werry nigh a-sailin' for the Cape of Good 'Ope, and needn't mind 'is mother's birth, as she'd give up thro' 'Melia 'avin' twins, as must come by the next train.

She says, "I don't know what to do, for I

can't leave 'er, tho' it's only jest round the corner; and Mrs. Padwick's out, and the gal gone for some firewood."

Well, I'd jest come in, and 'ad got my bonnet on, so I says, "I don't know 'ow to telegraft, or I'd do it with pleasure."

She says, "Oh, bless you, they'll show you 'ow at the hoffice, as is as easy as kiss my 'and."

"Well," I says, "wot am I to say?—tell me ag'in."

"Jest wot I've told you," says she; "but it's a matter of life and death; so go at once, there's a dear good soul, do."

Jest then we 'eard 'em a-callin' upstairs, as were poor Melia fainted ag'in, as is Letherbridge's wife, and 'is mother a-nussin' on 'er.

Well, I didn't know wot to do, so I goes to the telegraft, as is the post-office, and begun a-tellin' the young man all about it, as give me a bit of paper and a pen, and says, "Write."

I ain't no great shakes at writin', not when flurried, and my 'and does trimble a good deal in 'oldin' the pen, and never can spell when I'm put out; and if I was one minnit I must 'ave been twenty over it, and 'bliged to give it up for a bad job arter all; leastways the young feller said as he couldn't make it out.

So I says, "Who wants you to, as is private

affairs? so only jest you telegraft it, and that's all as you've got to do."

"All right," he says, "only you've 'rote it out wrong, as ought to put a word into each of them places as is marked on the paper."

The time and papers as it took me for to rite it out ag'in, as come to seven-and-sixpence when done, instead of a shillin', as Mrs. Letherbridge said as it would be.

So back I goes, and Mrs. Padwick were a-waitin' tea, as said quite short, as she thought as they'd been and sent me by telegraft myself; and as to Mrs. Letherbridge, she were downright insultin' over that telegraft 'avin' come to seven-and-sixpence, a-sayin' as we must 'ave been all drunk together, as I considers a werry low-lived remark from one lady to another, as was only jest beknown to one another thro' 'er 'avin' only moved in the week afore.

I were a-goin' 'ome the next day, so did not see nothink of that Mrs. Letherbridge, but says to Mrs. Padwick, "You may jest as well remind 'er as she 'ave not paid for that telegraft;" not as I wished to disturb 'er, as that poor woman's life were in reg'lar jeppardy, as the sayin' is.

So 'ome I goes, and 'ears no more about it for over a fortnight, when one evenin' there come a tap at the door, and up I goes thro' the gal bein'

upstairs a-cleanin' 'erself, and there who should stand but that Mrs. Letherbridge, as I took it for granted were come to pay me that seven-and-sixpence.

She says, "I don't know as I didn't ought to 'ave sent the perlice, and not 'ave stooped to 'ave come myself, tho' you must be a black-'arted fieldmale for to serve any one sich a cold-blooded trick, a-takin' a mean adwantage of any one's distress."

I says, "You'll excuse me, mum, but not bein' accustomed for to be abused like that on my own doorstep, and should not 'ave come to answer it, but a-thinkin' you the clean linen, as a wet night with a 'igh wind don't suit, and blowed two 'abit-shirts off last Saturday was a week."

"Oh," she says, "bother you and your long-winded stories. I've come to ask you wot you means by larkin' over a telegraft, as might 'ave been ruin to a 'ole family, as would 'ave emigrated by the wrong wessel, as were all your nasty spite."

I says, "My spite! Why, wotever 'ave I to be spiteful about?"

She says, "To go and tell a man for to sail by the wrong wessel to the Cape of Good 'Ope, and 'is wife and family to Canada."

I says, "Never; it's a black falsehood."

She says, "'Ere's the telegraft as you sent."

I says, "That's never my 'ritin'."

She says, "We've got the original, as you can't deny."

I says, "Step in, please," and leads the way into my parlour and lights the gas, and takes the paper out of 'er 'and, as were not werry clean. "Put the wessel back to Plymouth, and don't mind your mother's birth as is twins, jest as she were werry nigh a-sailin' for the Cape of Good 'Ope, as is where your wife and family is a-goin' to by the next train, as you must ketch without fail."

"Well," I says, "that's wot you told me to say, as I can take my oath on, and I'll thank you to pay me my seven-and-sixpence."

She says, "Never out of the County Court, and I repeats my words, as you did ought to be persecuted for a old maggin' impostor;" and out of the room she flings, and bangs the street door arter 'er like a thunderbolt a-goin' off.

So ever since that I 'aven't never fancied that there telegraft, and wouldn't trust to it; so I says to both Mrs. Padwick and Mrs. Archbut about these 'ere claims, "Let's wait for the reg'lar mail, as the postage bein' only thrippence in course they'll 'rite by."

"Ah; but," says Mrs. Archbut, "suppose as they declares war by it, a-takin' of us by surprise."

"Then," I says, "they'll be a nasty mean lot, as I don't believe as they'd be capable on, cos

tho' they're fond of braggin' and 'ave told me to my face as they could fight us any day, yet that wasn't the President as said that to me, nor yet Congress, but only young Bowerby, as boarded with Mrs. Skidmore, and were dressed out splendid of a Sunday to go to church, and 'ad put 'is mother in the poor'ouse because she were a burden to 'im.

I'm sure that young man used to go on tremenjous ag'in England, sayin' as we was all a-gettin' a lot of flat 'eads, and always sayin' he were thankful as he 'adn't been born a Britisher.

It always made 'im real wild, as they calls it, when I did used to tell 'im as it was only spite cos he weren't Inglish, as made 'im go on like that; but in course I didn't really mind wot a set of hignorant boys said, cos there wos nice sensible people over there as don't go on abusin' Queen Wictoria, nor yet the Prince of Wales; and as to fools, let 'em talk as they will do all over the world, and I don't think as we can say much to 'em on a good many pints, for there's six of one and 'arf a dozen of the other, as the sayin' is.

I'm sure this 'ere Tichbung case is a nice disgrace to the name of Hinglishmen, and wot with labels and diworces, and all a-goin' on, the papers ain't 'ardly fit to be read.

But in course right is right and wrong is wrong,

all the world over, and 'owever we was to be always a-watchin' as a wessel didn't sail out of Liverpool when they're at it all day long, as in course it were the Merrykins' busyness to look out, so when they see that wessel a-goin' to sail did ought to 'ave let the Tems perlice know, as looks arter everythink on the river, and werry often picks up a body, as is always returned "Found Drownded."

The same as I 'ad a row with our landlord at Stepney, cos the next door naybours shot the moon, as the sayin' is, and come and said as I must 'ave been aware on it' as took nearly all their things away piecemeal like, and only 'ad one cart as 'adn't no name on it, as I never see thro', bein' from 'ome the night they went, a-nussin' Melia Prentis with 'er fust, thro' the party she'd engaged with a-fallin' down on a bit of orange ag'in Spitalfields Church, and kep' 'er bed over ten days; as turned to lumbager, tho' no boues broke.

"But," I says, "I'm give to understand as all our judges and lawyers 'ave said, as the Merrykins ain't got no claim, and," I says, "we did ought to stick to what they says, for wotever is the use of 'avin' judges for to 'aug parties, and then let them off like that wretch as pisened them people at Brighton; but I suppose as you may kill anyone now-a-days, and say as you didn't go for to do it, like that fieldmale as 'it her own mother with the

poker, and were acquitted, cos 'er little boy said as the blow wouldn't 'ave 'urt a fly; poor child! 'ow should he know wot would 'urt a fly, as must 'ave been a common assault, any'ow, leastways, a uncommon one, let's 'ope, for it must be a dreadful thing to 'ave your own mother's blood on your 'ead, even tho' elderly and give to drink, cos I don't call that a correctin' 'er faults, to take the poker to 'er, tho' she may be your mother."

It give me quite a turn when Mrs. Archbut says as it's her minister's opinion as we're all a-goin' to the bad, and as this 'ere comit as is a-goin' to come bump ag'in us next August, will settle us all.

"Well then," I says, "the best thing as we can do is send the Merrykins a answer as'll keep 'em civil till arter August, cos it's no use a-wastin' of our powder and shot, so close ag'in the end of the world, as we may as well all die friends, tho' I must say as it seems to me as we might keep a good look out, and steer off that comit, jest the same as a wessel do the icebugs, as we was all surrounded by a-comin' 'ome from Merryker, as I knowed nothink about till the next mornin', when it were all over, and I daresay it will be the same way with the comit, as will be a nine days' wonder, as the sayin is, tho' I 'eard say if it were to come within nine days of us, we should all be scorched up to a cinder."

I weren't a bit afraid of no icebugs in comin' 'ome, nor yet in goin' out to Merryker, but must say as I come 'ome with a light 'art, for tho' it's ever so 'umble, there's no place like 'ome, as the sayin' is.

It certingly were a noble looking ship to look at as we come in, and when we was got aboard, I says to Brown, "Wherever is the paddles to take us thro' the water."

He says, "It's a screw."

I says, "Whatever do you mean?"

"Why," he says, "as it were worked with a screw, as is in the end of the boat."

"Well," I says, "I never did, not as I can make out 'owever a screw is to 'old on to water, but," I says, "as long as it gets us 'ome safe, I don't care."

I must say as it were 'ard work a-sayin' good-bye to Joe as come to see us off, and when we was a-partin', I says to 'im, "Joe," I says, "give my love to your wife, and tell 'er to let bygones be bygones, not as ever I could forget 'er behaviour, but I wished for to part at peace with my boy, as I can't never espect to see no more this side of the grave."

We was a good while gettin' off, and when I see my boy a-goin' away aboard that little steamer, I waves my 'ankercher to 'im ever so long, and then went down into my cabin and 'ad a good cry, as

made me feel better, and arter I'd 'ad some tea I felt myself ag'in.

I don't know whatever use that screw can be escept it is for to make the wessel roll, as I've 'eard as it did, and I'm sure if that's the use on it, it does its duty, for I never did fcel nothink like it, as is a awful feelin', everything a-slidin' away from you and you a-sliding away from everythink by turns.

I'm sure the way as the soup rolled out of the plate all over me one way, was a nice mess, and then I sent a cup of tea flyin' across the table, the other, slap into a gentleman's shirt front, jest as I were a-raisin' it to my lips.

It certingly was enough to aggrawate anybody, not as it were manners in 'im for to say as I blowed like a grampus, and wouldn't believe as I 'adn't coughed a-drinkiu' with my mouth full, without a-turnin' my 'ead away, as is manners as I were taught when a child, and not likely to depart from at my age.

We 'ad a lovely passage 'ome all the way, tho' I must say it were dull, and I kep' a-thinkin' over all as I'd see, and come to 'old as the Merrykins wasn't a bad lot, tho' a-many faults about 'em, as in course they can't see theirselves the same as any one with a black on his nose ain't awares on it, without a friend for to tell you on it.

Not as I considers it a clean trick in anyone to spit on their 'ankercher, and offer to wipe it off, tho' meant perlite no doubt, and in a friendly sperrit.

I'm sure, wot with one thing and wot with another, there ain't no livin' in peace and safety in this world without bein' in constant dread as some one will do somethink to you, like that there forriner as were murdered the werry day he arrived at the Cherrin' Cross station, and rote that letter for to inform 'is friends, as were certingly werry considcratc in them as murdered 'im, for to let 'im ritc a letter fust afore they did it, and hadd a postscrip jest to say as he werc done for, which is jest like them secrct societies, as they calls 'em, as always throws a light on anythink serruptitious like.

I should like to 'ave all them empty carridges and wans as is in the station well searched for to find 'is remains, poor feller! as would be a satisfaction if they could only send 'is friends a lock of 'is 'air.

It made me feel quite nervous a-goin' from Cherrin' Cross to Cannin Street the other day, tho' only five minnits, to think as I might be done away with, and pre'aps throwed out of the carridge winder in crossin' the river twice, as is wot they did with 'im, no doubt.

I begged and prayed of Brown for to get out at London Bridge a-comin' up from Woolwich, and not go on to Cherrin' Cross, as cut me that short

a-askin' if I thought he were a fool to go on to Cherrin' Cross, when London Bridge were 'is nearest pint in comin' to Bow.

But really I'm that nervous over everythink, cos 'owever can I tell as Brown is Brown, if anyone were to come and knock at the door and say as he were the real Brown.

I'm sure I couldn't never spend a thousand pound a day for to prove 'is hinnercence, and who is to prove anythink, if anyone will swear as it ain't so.

It's my opinion as London's a-gettin' to big and too confusin', and there's so many people in the world now-a-day, as you can't tell who's who, as the sayin' is.

Talk of a wise child a-knowin' of 'is own father, it's a wise father and mother too as knows their own child, with all the choppin' and changes as is a-goin' on, and young people that for'ard as they want to put you down jest like the Merrykins, as considers you old at forty.

I were glad as that Turney-Gen'ral put a stop to that there notion as anyone were old at fifty, cos in course now he've said it, it's law, and good law too, as parties can be punished for a-takin' away anyone's real character in callin' 'em old at fifty, as is the prime of heverything, for I do think as up to that parties is werry like young kittens under eight

days, as ain't got their eyes open; and I'm sure I don't feel 'ardly wide awake now, tho' I'm up to a few things as I didn't know a year or two ago, as 'ave sowed my wile oats, as the sayin' is.

But, law bless me, this is such a world of everythink as we lives in constant, that one aint 'ardly never got time for to give things a good think over, as in course one did ought to in a matter of life and death, as I considers goin' to war; and that's why I says I never will give no opinion over this 'ere Allyblammer till I've 'ad time for to sit down to it reg'lar, and that don't seem never to come.

For jest as I'd got my bit of work on my lap the other arternoon, in who should come a-bouncin' but Miss Pimber, as 'ad brought me some things for to try on as she'd 'ad straight from France, as she said was recommended to them as 'ad a tenderness to corpulency.

'Er 'ead were full of nothing but Tichbung, as I were reg'lar sick on, so tried for to choke 'er off with a glass of my orange wine, as is full strong and quite a corjial to the stomick.

Well, she set a-suppin' on it and a-maggin' on about the Claimint, as I told 'er I didn't care if he were 'ung, drored, and quartered, but there weren't no stoppin' 'er, so I let 'er go on and kep' a-thinkin' about somethink else.

I never did 'ear anyone go on more savidge over

this 'ere Tichbung case than Miss Pimber, as is in the stay-makin' line, and were werry much put out at me a-sayin' as I were a-thinkin' of bein' moulded by steam, as makes you a lovely figger in no time.

Well, she always gets the paper a day old from the public where she do 'ave 'er beer from twice a-day, and she come in with quite a bounce and says, "He's the right man arter all, tho' they 'ave dared for to send 'im to Newgate, as were true to the last, and give 'is name Roger Tichbung even at the werry prison doors, as shows 'is principles."

"Well," I says, "we shall see."

She says, "Any one as'll read the paper as they lent me at the public, will see as it's quite clear as he've got a little family, as in course can't get the property, poor things, as is 'ard on them."

"Well," I says, "'ow is it as your paper's so much wiser than Judge and Jury?"

"Oh!" she says, "them as rote it ain't got no one to please but theirselves."

"Yes," I says, "and them as reads that paper as pre'aps feels more for a butcher than they would for anyone else," but I says, "I'm reg'lar sick on it, and can't think whyever on earth he didn't take and levant like Odger over a wall in woman's clothes, as wouldn't 'ave been stopped if he'd 'ave said he were the fat woman from near Piccadilly a-goin' over to Merryker agin to show 'isself."

"Ah!" she says, "becausc he's a deal too 'onerable with all that money in 'is pocket."

"Well," I says, "don't you take on so about it, cos it won't make no difference to you nor yet to me; and as to Brown the two or three pound as he'd laid on it he won't get, as shows it's a 'umbuggin' sort of a werdict for them as 'ad wagers on it, not as I 'olds with them bets as is only gamblin' arter all, not but wot a man likes to back 'is opinion, as the sayin' is; but," I says, "I'm sure I shan't sleep a bit 'eavier nor lighter, whether he's in Newgate or not."

"Oh!" she says, "he'll be bailed out and get 'is rights arter all."

"Well," I says, "then he can't complain, nor yet 'is friends neither; but," I says, "as to tryin' on them things as you've brought me I couldn't, wero it ever so; but you'd best leave 'em and call in ag'in in a day or two;" and so she did, and I were glad to get rid on 'er, for I didn't want no more of 'er clack.

I were a-sayin' to Mrs. Pulford, as livin' close by, drops in constant, "Why," I says, "in courso if Merryker were in want, why, she might always 'ave a friend in us; but," says I, "why, they can't never espect us to be a-payin' their debts, and if they would get a-fightin', why, they must take the consequences, as we all knows them civil wars is

the wust; but as I were a-sayin' when I were there, in course they are a very great people no doubt, but werry like the rest of the world as far as ever I see, but as to sayin' they'll take ten millions for them claims and not 'ave no more bother about it, it's werry 'andsome of them to be that moderate, as pre'aps would like us to send 'em over the crown jewels to keep till the money's paid, or else 'ave Ireland, like the Prooshuns 'ave got the Rhine from the French, as I see 'em there myself last year."

As they all seemed werry 'appy, but don't think werry much of that there Lewy Napoleon, as let 'em into sich a 'ole, but if they likes 'im back that's there busyness, let 'em 'ave 'im back, if them Prooshuns will let 'em, and he'll get 'em into a wuss mess than ever afore he's come to 'is right end, as did ought to 'ave been the 'ulks long ago.

Talk about the Claimint bein' in Newgate, as is 'is deserts no doubt, where did others ought to be as pretends as their kings and hemperors, and ain't nothink of the sort, but in course as I said afore, we ain't got nothink to do with France, nor yet Merryker neither, as may 'ave a hemperor of their own, and pre'aps will 'ave some day, as may be a nigger, like the West Indies as my Joe were at, and told me as the hemperor were as black as 'is boots, in a cock 'at and feathers, and none the wuss for that.

Says Mrs. Pulford to me, "Martha, you makes werry light over this ere Merrykin difficulty, but it may end bad, for wot should you say if the Yankees was to take us all prisoners?"

"Well, then," I says, "we should all 'ave to learn to speak Merrykin, and all I 'opes is as they won't make us 'ave their tea, nor yet no other drinkables."

"Ah!" she says, "you don't know wot they wouldn't do to us."

I says, "I don't, indeed."

Well, jest then in come Brown, as said it were all true, and as Ingland were to be inwaded, for one of them Merrykin gin'rals 'ad said so in the name of Rosa.

I says, "Bless your 'art, that ain't no gin'ral's name, but a negro black gal, and depend on it as it's all a lark together, and we shan't have no war, for if the Merrykins was to come we should be werry glad to see 'em."

As well I remembers one of their wessels of war a-comin' to Portsmouth, and officers jest the same gentlemen as any other sailors, as comes ashore all over the world, and spends their money, and them Merrykins 'ad grand balls give 'em, and was as 'appy as the day is long.

"Well," says Brown, "I believe as you are right there, old gal, for," he says, "the Merrykin navy

is a reg'lar 'oner to the country, and it's a pity as they ain't got more to say in the Government."

I says, "And whyever not, we've all 'eard of a army a-governin' of a country, then why not a navy, as could soon keep any place in order by 'avin' of a man-o'-war alongside as could fire a broadside slap into the town if there was any rows, and when things was quiet would jest land all friendly, and spend their money like the true British sailor."

Says Brown, "You're a-settlin' on it, you are; but," he says, "let's drop it, and do see about the supper; that's a good gal, do."

As is Brown's ways of speakin' to call me a gal when in a good 'umour, and never see 'im more pleased, as I think were all owin' to that Claimint bein' floored, and a meetin' with a party as would pay 'im a bet onerable, and not go to get out on it because of some quibble about the werdick, as is wot I don't 'old with.

Well, I'd got my 'ead werry full of the Ally-blammer, and 'ad been to look at a upper part, as we've took close to the Edgeware Road, as is five rooms, and 'andy for Mrs. Padwick, all new papered and painted, with only a coachmakin' business on the ground floor, as shets up with dusk.

Well, the place bein' all topsy turvey, as the sayin' is, I thought as I'd go on and see poor Mary Ann Milford, as lives up in Camdin Town, and the

doctor says will never old up 'er 'ead ag'in, thro' a carbunkle in the back of the neck, as there's fears as the roots will strike 'ome into the brain; and draw out all 'er senses.

It were sich a lovely day, so I thought as I'd take a omblebus as far as the Regency Park Gates, and then walk up past the Collerseum, and past wot did use to be the Dyerramer, as turned round on a pivet like, and showed you lovely views, tho' I pretty nigh sprained my ancle a-steppin' in whilst it were all dark, and set down in a old man's lap, as shoved me for'ard thro' my eels a-comin' in contrack with 'is gouty toes, and knocked a old fieldmale over settin' in front, flat on 'er face, as screamed murder while the picter were a-goin' round, as 'ad to be took out as soon as it stopped, and turned me out too for makin' a disturbance.

It's a place as is a chapel now, as always were a place for them as is of a serous turn, the same as Sir Mortin Peter, as worshipped there with all 'is servants twice a day of a Sunday, in a private bus, as brought em miles, cos in course he didn't use his carridge on the Sabbath any more than a strick Jew did ought to.

But, law, for all is bein' that good, 'ad 'is enemies, bless you, for I've 'card parties as lived at Bristol say all manner about 'im, as only shows as not even bein' a partikler Baptist won't save you from the effects of calermel.

Well, I 'adn't got werry fur past by the Collerseum, where I well remembers a-bein' one evenin' when the earthquake at Lisbin took place, and a werry orful sight, as the shock on were felt as fur as Plymouth, I've 'eard say, and 'ad one over in New York last year, as shows as them things ain't died out like the small-pox for all the waxination, as some speaks ag'in, but can't be wuss than nocculation, as I'm sure poor Ann Courtope will carry the marks on to 'er grave, as were one eye carried away, and all 'er eyebrows eat off; and pits down to below 'er blade-bones; as will never see sixty any more in this world, and yet talks about that feller Udell, a-marryin' of 'er, as were a prize-fighter, and born whitey brown, and not more than forty, I'm sure.

Well, jest as I got ag'in the Collerseum, I 'eard music a-comin' up be'ind me, and says, "'Ere's the sojers a-comin' as will be a treat."

So I stands back ag'in the railin's for to see 'em pass.

But, law bless you, I says to a old man as sold a few apples and nuts, I says, "These ain't never sojers!"

"No," says he, "it's the Merrykins."

I says, "The wot?"

"Why," he says, "the Merrykins as is jest come over."

I says, "Whenever did they land?"

"Oh!" he says, "I don't know."

Well, sure enuf they was a outlandish lookin' lot, as was all on 'orseback, with 'elmets, and harmer, and a lot of ladies on 'orses, and one all dressed up, a-settin' on a throne, as 'ad a lion at 'er feet.

It give me sich a orful turn; and jest where I were a-standin' there's a way as leads thro' into Halbany Street, and thro' it I slips like a ninepin, as the sayin' is; and as luck would 'ave it there were a Waterloo a-passin' pretty nigh, as I jumps into, and thankful too.

My breath was so taken away as speak I couldn't for ever so long, not till we was close ag'in that long wall of them barricks.

Well, there was only a gentleman and a little gal in the bus besides me, and as we passed close to them barrick gates, the little gal begun a-bein' pleased at seein' of the sojers who were a-standiu' there.

That there gentleman said to 'er as they was a set of idle, good-for-nothink fellers.

I says, "Oh, sir," I says, "do not speak ag'in em, cos I could not set and 'ear the harmy run down; for," I says, "there's no knowin' 'ow soon we may be in want on 'em, with the Merrykins a-goin' on as they are."

"Yes," he says, "we shall have trouble there, but must wait for their anser."

I says, "As is come."

He says, "When?"

"Well," I says, "I've see a sight in the Park there as 'ave turned the 'hole mask of my blood; and to think of their a-darin' to send wild beasts, too."

He says, "Wot for?"

"Oh," I says, "no doubt for to strike terrors into us, if they can't coax us over with some lovely gals, cos, in course, if fair means won't do, they'll try foul; and where would any one be with lions, and tigers, and wild beasts let loose all over the place?"

"Well," he says, "I don't know."

When I spoke about wild beasts bein' let loose, that child begun a-screamin' and a-clingin' to that gent, as were 'er gran'pa, tho' he didn't look it.

He turned on me like anythink, and says, "You must be a werry foolish old lady for to frighten a poor child like this. 'Ere, conductor, let me out, and see as this 'ere person don't do 'erself a mischief in your bus, for I'm sure she's mad;" and out he gets.

Well, in course I weren't a-goin' to let myself down for to esplain to a conductor, tho' he were a werry civil young man; but I rode on to the "Britannier," as is the end of my journey, thro' poor

Mary Ann bein' now a-livin' close ag'in the "Red Cap," as is a pleasant sitivation, and cheerful, thro' a-lookin' all over a tombstone-maker's yard.

I found 'er werry low, poor thing, and glad to see me, as 'ad brought 'er some few things; not as she wants for anythink, thro' bein' left comfortable by a aunt as brought 'er up.

It were about three when I got there; so 'er and me agreed as four were a werry nice 'our for a cup of tea, so we set a-chattin' werry pleasant over it along with a werry nice party as nusses 'er more for love than money.

We got a-talkin' over all manner, as were the Tichbung case, and this 'ere label on Lady Twist, as some says is sure to stick to 'er like mud, and a downright disgrace to any one as calls 'isself a man, let alone a lawyer; and then we got on to the Merrykins, as I were werry ginger over, as the sayin' is, thro' a-knowin' as Mary Ann's aunt's fust were from Liverpool, as I knows is the nearest part of Ingland to Merryker.

So didn't say one word about wot I'd see in the Park till tea were over, when in who should come but Mary Ann's doctor, as I'd never see afore, but were werry chatty, and begun a-tellin' Mary Ann all the news, and were werry much ag'in these 'ere Allyblammer claims, and so were Mary Ann too, for that matter.

So, seein' 'ow the land laid, as the sayin' is, I puts in my oar, and says, "I do 'ope as Queen 'Wictoria won't give 'em no encouragement."

He says, "Not likely as she will, ag'in the adwice of 'er Ministers."

"Ah, but," I says, "that Gladstin is all for the mob, tho' he did lose 'is temper over it in Parlyment, and give that there Dizzy the false'ood plump, when twitted with it, as certingly did not tell the story right, for I 'appened to know all about that there Trafalgar Square row, thro' a-passin' at the time, and see all them ruffs a-marchin' up to where Gladstin lives, and were told as 'is good lady and 'er dorter come out on the balcony and bowed to 'em, as were pre'aps only thro' fear of the winders.

For I well remembers my dear mother a-stickin' up a pair of mouldy candles in the winder, when I were quite a child and we lived near Millbank, thro' the mob a-'ollerin' out, "Light up," when Queen Caroline come to London for to defy King George to prove his words, as she were not 'is lawful wife, arter he'd 'ad 'er name took out of the Prayer Book, thro' a-considerin' as she were past prayin' for, as the sayin' is, as weren't no busyness of 'isn to settle, any'ow.

Says that doctor to me, "Mum, you knows a

deal, and in my opinion all as you don't know ain't worth knowin'

"Ah," I says, "I weren't born yesterday, nor yet the day afore, and do 'ope as I may never live to see old Ingland a-flyin' like the dust, as the sayin' is, afore 'er foes."

He says, "No fear of that, with our glorious navy."

"Ah, but," I says, "if all our ships is let rot at the bottom, like that there 'Maderer,' they'll soon go down with a run the same as she did, as is a nice disgrace to them as ordered 'er to sea, as did ought to be 'ung at the yardarm."

"Ah," he says, "that were a bad busyness."

"Yes," I says, "and I've met with a party a-travellin' as were quite the gentleman, tho' only second class, as told me in the railroad with 'is own lips as he'd condemned 'er fifteen years afore."

"Ah," says the doctor, "that's the wust of so much party sperrit."

"Yes," I says, "and that's why it's a pity as that there Gladstin won't shake 'ands with Dizzy and be friends, tho' in course they never would be in their 'arts, cos Gladstin can't get over Dizzy bein' only a cristialized Jew, as the sayin' is; but, law, it's best not to 'ave them strong Christian feelin's ag'in any one, when your country is at the stake, as the sayin' is."

Says the doctor, "You've been in Merryker?"

"Yes," I says, "sir, leastways from New York to New Orleens, and out to Chickarger, where the cow kicked over the kerersene lamp, and might 'ave gone on to the Mormons, but did not wish to, thro' not a-'oldin' with their ways, as wouldn't set down to tea with a man and 'is six wives, any more than I'd be seen a-dancin' at a casiner, as I considers more respectable."

I says, "And tho' I may seem to be a-settin' 'ear that calm, I'm all of a inward trimble."

Says the doctor, "Let me recommend a little somethink warm."

I says, "It is a thing as I 'ave took before, under adwice, but never one to give in to them sperritual comforts, as grows on you in no time."

Well, the party as were a-nussin', as 'er name were Elkins, she mixed us all a little, the doctor included, as said as he'd dined early, thro' espectin' to be called out any minnit, and only lived a stone's throw off, as the sayin' is.

I 'adn't 'ardly took the tumbler from my lips, when I 'eard boys a-shoutin' all along the road.

I says, "Wot are they callin'?"

Says the doctor, "The Claimint out on bail."

"Ah!" I says, "I 'eard say as Rothchild 'ad come down to Newgate with 'is carridge full of money for to take 'im out as in course 'ave got so

much money as he's thankful to anyone as'll ease 'im of it."

Says the doctor, "Don't you believe it; Rothchild wouldn't throw 'is money away, tho' he'd give some on it in a good cause."

"Oh yes," I says, "I've 'eard that afore."

Well, Mrs. Elkins she'd been and run down to the door, and come in ag'in as white as ashes, and says, "It's war with Merryker as he's a 'ollerin' out like mad."

I says, "I knowed it, the moment as I see that percession in the Regency Park this mornin', as in course 'ave been sent over to terrify Queen Wictoria."

So then I told them all about it, a-sayin' as I'd kep' my feclin's to myself over it for fear of terrifyin' Mary Ann.

If she didn't bust out a-larfin' like mad, and so did the doctor, as says, "My dear, good lady, why, that's the circus."

I says, "Escuse me, sir, but I thinks I knows a circus when I sees it, as 'ave been in Rome and see the biggest in the world, as I 'ears that waggerbone, the king of Hitaly, 'avo been and took from the Pope, and turned into 'orsemanship."

Says the doctor, "This is a Merrykin circus."

"Then," I says, "mark my words, it means mischief, as is the narrer end of the edge, as the

sayin' is, and wants to coax the Hinglish into likin' the Merrykins, by a-lettin' of them see the show for nothink, all about the streets; as is a deep lot, but won't take in Martha Brown, as there ain't nothink green about, as the sayin' is."

"Besides, I do not 'old with sich goin's on, as is 'ighly dangerous, cos if that Merrykin lady likes to ride thro' the town with a ragin' lion at 'er feet, others may not see it, as give me a horful turn, and the werry mention on it nearly sent a little girl into fits, in the bus as I come in."

"Oh!" says the doctor, "was that you as frightened my little child so? a-talkin' of wild beasts bein' broke loose in the Regency Park, as the poor little thing thought were the Jewlogical Gardins, as she's always afraid of, thro' 'earin' the beasts roar when a-walkin' in the Park."

"Well," I says, "I'm sure the child were not more frightened, nor yet 'arf so much as me."

"Come, come," he says, "Mrs. Brown, you're only jokin'."

I says, "Sir, I am perfect serous."

If he didn't begin a-larfin' ag'in, as set the others off. So as I were not a-goin' to set to be a larfin' stock of to a common pothecary, so I got up for to go.

But the doctor and Mrs. Elkins both went to Mary Ann as said she felt faint, and the doctor he give 'er a drop of brandy, and says to me, "Mrs.

Brown, you've done 'er more good than me, for now she'll be better if we can but keep up 'er strength."

So in course I wouldn't go off in no dudgeon, as the sayin' is, but set for a 'our or two, and me and Mrs. Elkins 'ad a crab for supper, tho' in course Mary Ann stuck to 'er arrerroot, and the doctor were gone, but said as he'd look in the last thing, but I didn't wait for 'im, but left 'er quite a different creetur, as said in partin', "I'm sure you've give me a good larf over the Allyblammer claims."

So I wished 'er and Mrs. Elkins a good night, and got into a Waterloo, as took me to the Circus, but I'd got my 'ead so full of one thing and another, that instead of goin' on to Mrs. Padwick's, as I were goin' to sleep at, I got into a Stratford and Bow, and never woke up till close ag'in the railway arch as crosses the Bow road, as the whistle on woke me up.

So I says, "Where am I?"

Says the conductor, "Close 'ome, Mrs. Brown," thro' a-knowin' of me by sight.

I says, "Mussy on us!" I says, "I didn't mean to come 'ere;" for I couldn't for the life on me remember gettin' into 'is bus.

"Oh!" he says, "you 'ailed me jest as I were a-turnin' into Regent Street."

I says, "I can't think wotever could have ailed

me, then. Why, I'm a-goin' to sleep at the West End."

He says, "You better go 'ome now, as you are 'ere."

I says, "Go 'ome, young man, don't talk foolishness, as 'ave got nothink but the dresser and a crate of crockeryware to sleep on, as heverything were moved yesterday, and I ain't been able to begin to set to rights, thro' not bein' able to get the painters out, as I can't bear the smell on, and wouldn't sleep in a 'ouse with for all the world."

"Well," he says, "here's our last bus back a-comin', shall I stop it?"

I says, "Do so, by all manner of means," aud so in I got, but never did I get to the Circus till nigh on twelve; and, as to Mrs. Padwick's, I weren't there till jest on one, and pretty nigh tore in 'arf by two of them yaller buses a-quarrellin' for me with a red Royal Oak at the Circus.

There's one comfort as I need not 'urry over my movin', and shall get the place all nice and ready for Brown, as 'ave been back'ards and for'ards to Brumagem constant, as he might as well be stoker too, as I tells 'im.

Not as he rides on the injin, as I've 'eard of Dooks a-doin', not as I considers it their place, let alone the smoke and dirt as they must come in contract with, as makes me always thankful as Brown

weren't brought up to it, not as he would be, in course, thro' railways not a-bein' thought on when he was born, as is a good many years ago now, tho' it seems only like yesterday as we 'eard about steam bein' inwented.

Not but I always knowed it were a dreadful thing to scald you, thro' the spout of the kettle a-ketchin' my arm, when takin' of it off with short sleeves, as was always wore over your work when I were a gal, and a deal better than dippin' your sleeves into heverythink, besides a-pullin' things over with 'em.

So I don't mean to believe nothink more about the Allyblammer bustin' out into a war, nor yet the Claimint bein' bailed out, till them as tells me as I can believe.

"Cos them boys with the papers, in course, only wants to sell them, and you, too, if you're sich a flat as to believe 'em," as is wot Brown told me when we was a drivin' down to the steamer at Liverpool, a-goin' off for Merryker, and I give a boy sixpence for *The Times*, jest as a last remembrance of old Ingland, and the young willin only give me the births, deaths, and marridges of the day beforo.

But, law, we lives in such strange times, that nothink wouldn't never surprise me; so I'm always on the look out for squalls, as the sayin' is, as is wot the Merrykins will 'ave to do if they comes

over to conker us, cos they'll 'ave to get over Hirelaud, as is 'ighly dangerous, and 'ave capsized a many before now, and will do so ag'in, no doubt, if not properly managed.

Mrs. Pulford she come in quite early on the Wensday to Mrs. Padwick, and says, "'Ave you seen the papers?"

I says, "Never till the evenin' now, as ain't got the time."

"Well, then," she says, "it's all up with the Claimint, as can't get bail, and is to be judged to-morrer."

"Well," I says, "and serve 'im right."

"Ah!" she says, "some still says as he's the man."

I says, "Some fools 'll say anythink but their prayers, and them they whistles, as the sayin' is; but," I says, "anyone as sticks up for 'im now must be reg'lar denuded of their seuses, cos I see by the paper last night as even he can't keep 'is own council, as the sayin' is; as is, in course, too much the gentleman for to back up a impostor."

"But," I says, "I do think as some parties is reg'lar took foolish in their senses over this 'ere case, for nothink couldn't be more clearer than them ladies up and spoke; and if I'd been one on 'em, I'd 'ave waited for that willin, if I'd 'ave stood at the door-step till I dropped, and I'd 'ave cut 'im all about with a 'orsewhip, a willin, and a-left

marks on 'im as he should be knowed by even down to all posteriority. Cos, in course, there's no knowin' as he mayn't come up ag'in with 'is lies some day."

When Brown come in that fust day, and said it were true as he were safe lodged in Newgate, I says, "I do 'ope as some of the others will be there with 'im, and long may they stop there, a-darin' for to take up every one's time like as they 'ave done; and I'm sure I'm glad as it's over afore we're done a-movin', or I never should 'ave 'ad anythink unpacked proper with my 'ead full of that feller."

Says Mrs. Pulford, "'Ow about the Queen a-givin' John Brown a gold medal and twenty-five pound a-year for savin' of 'er life the other day?"

"Oh!" says Brown, "she'd better 'ave left that alone."

"Ah!" I says, "that's cos you don't understand Queen Wictoria's ways, as is the Queen all over, and knows 'ow for to give John Brown a nasty one on the quiet, cos, in course, she knows 'ow for to reward any one as saves 'er life, as, in course, wouldn't be by givin' on 'im a Waterloo medal, the same as old 'Iggins, of Battersea 'ad, as were a out-pensioner in Chelsea 'Ospital, and see the Dook of Brunswick shot like a dog with Lord Anglesea's leg carried away by a stray ball; but

would 'ave took and made 'im a barrernite, at the least, on the spot, the same as the Hemperor of Roosher did that party as took and knocked the pistol out of the man's 'and, as were a 'atter's 'prentis, and drunk 'isself to death within a year."

And as to twenty-five pounds a year, why, she'd 'ave give 'im twenty-five thousands a year, leastways Parlyment would, the same as they prowides for the Royal family.

As to Queen Wictoria, bless 'er royal 'art, if that poor wretch of a boy 'ad meant any mischief, and 'ad got a real pistol close ag'in 'er 'ead, with powder and shot, he'd plenty of time to 'ave drored the fatal trigger, as we all knows is but a 'air's breath, as the sayin' is, and then she might 'ave 'ollered out in wain for elp, with 'er own sons a-settin' facin' er, and them other parties round 'er, and yet for all the good any on 'em could 'ave been to 'er, John Brown included, she might 'ave been a dead, sufferin' now; but, bless you, she knowed all about it, and 'er only words was about the boy, "Goodness gracious, don't 'urt 'im," as was the Queen all over.

In course, she knows wot a footman's duties is as well as anybody, as did ought both on 'em to 'ave been down at the carridge-door afore ever it stopped, and 'ave kep' any one away; but bein' the lady, in course Queen Wictoria lets 'em down gentle,

and she've give one or two the sack on the quiet, and thro' John Brown bein' a faithful servint, and couldn't 'elp 'is kilt a-ketchin' in the rumble, she've been and pensioned 'im off quiet, as is only right, cos in course she wouldn't like 'im to be a-playin' the bagpipes in the street for a livin' arter settin' behind 'er carridge, as I've seen some of them Crimein meddles a-sweepin' a crossin', with a wooden leg afore now, as is, in my opinion, not the way to come to the old sojer, as the sayin' is.

Says Brown, "You've been and got 'old of the wrong end of the stick altogether," for he says, "John Brown's been rewarded for 'is conduct on that there partikler occasion."

"Well," I says, "Queen Wictoria knows 'er own busyness best, and if she considers as he did 'er a service, in course she's a right to reward 'im for it; but it didn't read like much of a service in the papers, and I knows werry well if it 'ad been me, I shouldn't 'ave troubled 'im with my service no longer, and sent 'im off with the others."

But as I were a-sayin' all this 'ere ain't Ally-blammer claims, as lays in a nutshell, as the sayin' is, cos in course we owes Merryker a good deal, or we don't owe 'er nothink.

If it were our fault a-lettin' of that Ally-blammer go out a-burnin' and a-destroyin' everythink, why, pay we must; but if it weren't, whyever

should we pay a fardin,' I wants to know, any more than me pay for the plate-glass shop front as Mr. Portlock the butcher's 'orse and cart run into and smashed, as bolted away thro' bein' kep' a-standin' alone at a 'ouse oppersite, with me at the first-floor winder a-puttin' up clean blinds, as might 'ave checked 'im by a-'ollerin' out "Wo!"—not as he'd 'ave 'eard me with the sash down, and if he 'ad, wouldn't 'ave paid no more attentions to me than the Allyblammer, a-knowin' as I couldn't get at 'im to stop 'im from startin'.

But surely we don't want none of them skally-wags of forriners, like your Kings of Hitaly nor yet Brazeels neither, to settle the pint for us, cos how should they know anythink about it as don't live at Liverpool, nor yet know nothink of our laws.

Nor yet don't the Merrykins, for that matter, but might easily be learned if they was taught the lesson proper, and would set still and listen.

So it's my opinion as we didn't never ought to 'ave called in no forriners, but when the bill were sent in did ought jest to 'ave looked into it fair and open like, and then 'ave rote a civil answer, a-sayin' as we didn't consider ourselves anserable.

As to goin' to war over it, that's all rubbish, cos the parties in Merryker as wants a war is them as 'ave got no money to pay for it; and them as is rich ain't sich fools as to spend their money over wot

ain't worth powder and shot, as would stop the trade and ruin the country.

I knows werry well wot it all means, as is jest to please the pot-'ouse parties, as is always a-talkin' politics, a-idlin' away their time a-loafin' about; but as they've all got wotes, in course the President, as they calls 'im, wants to please 'em, and then pre'aps they might re-elect 'im over ag'in, the same as Dick Whittin'ton, as were three times Lord Mare of London, the same as them bells told 'im as he should be when a-settin' on that stone at 'Ighgate 'Ill, as I've see myself; as shows as some fortune-tellers is right; not as I believes in 'em, tho' Mrs. Prittlewell were told by one a-walkin' up a 'ill at Norwood as she'd 'ave a fortune come to 'er in a Swaller, as were the name of the wessel as 'er own uncle went down in, as left 'er five thousand pounds in the funs, and two free'old 'ouses; so we didn't ought to despise nothink.

But, law bless me! it weren't no use me a-talkin' to Brown over it, cos tho' he knows I were right, yet he must contradict; but well I knows as there's other parties as thinks a deal of my 'pinion over a many pints, and in course 'avin' been in Merryker, I can speak; and if ever I goes ag'in I shall tell 'em about a many things as I considers their faults, and if not able for to 'ave a meetin' at one of them Institutes as they're so fond on, I shall 'rite to them

noosepapers; and I knows as every one will read wot I says, and they likes 'avin' of their faults pinted out to 'em in a friendly sperrit, as is jest wot I feels.

Not but wot I've got my own troubles on my 'ands, as shall be obligated for to 'ave the law ag'in that Mrs. Richison, as goes about a-sayin' orful things about me, all thro' them drains as 'er 'usban' fell into, as says he were a-suppin' along with me, when it is well beknown to Susan Jane Trimlet, as is my servant's name, as I were in bed and sound asleep, and only roused like a Christian duty for to 'elp a feller creetur in distress, as any one must consider a man down a drain in licker.

But it's a bad world, and no one ain't safe, not even the Archbishop of Canterberry 'isself, for all 'is satin and lorn sleeves, as might 'ave is character took away by any waggerbone as were to choose to 'ave 'im afore a magistrate, and ask 'im all manner of questions, as it would puzzle any one as goes about much for to be asked where did you sleep one night, and where did you sup another? as I considers shameful, partikler for a lady, and I'm sure if I was to be put on my oath about it, there I should stick till Doomsday, as the sayin' is.

But we shall see wot anser the Merrykins sends, as no doubt will be a civil one, and I'm sure, goodness knows, we don't want to quarrel with 'em,

jest arter they've 'ad such a nice row among themselves, and been nearly all burnt out in Chickarger, as pre'aps they'll want us to pay for, cos it were an Irish boy as took that there kerersene lamp for to milk the cow with, as were a awkord thing, and no wonder she kicked it over, poor thing, as is timid animals all the world over.

But as to war, I'm sure it would bother us enuf, and when we took Merryker wotever should we do with it, and whoever would go to be the Lord Leeftenant the same as Ireland, and if they complains as Queen Wictoria never goes over there, I'm sure she wouldn't be likely to keep a-bobbin' over to Merryker, tho' the steamers is werry fine, and in course she might go in the "Grcat Eastern," as is that size it can't roll, nor never feel sea-sick, and therc and back under a month, as would in course be pleased to see 'er like the rest of 'er subjecs; not as she'd want 'em, as ain't 'er sort, and wouldn't take to bein' lords and ladies werry easy thro' never bein' used to 'igh life.

But, bless mc, to think of the trouble it would be for to govcrn it, thro' bein' sich a size, and made up of all manner, as would be wuss than Indier for to keep in order, and no thanks neither for all our trouble, cos we shouldn't never satisfy 'em, not if we was to give 'em the best of our harmy and the

'Stablished Church into the bargin, and all the other blessin's as we lives under.

I'm sure them's Queen Wictoria's feelin's, and that's why if that there President, as they calls 'im, was jest to put 'isself aboard of a steamer, and come over, why it might be settled in no time, jest thro' 'im a-seein' Gladstin, or one of them under-strappers; cos in course Queen Wictoria wouldn't be bothered over it jest now, as she's a-goin' to Germany for to see 'er 'arf sister by the mother's side, as shows wot a golden 'art she'd got over anybody's afflictions.

I do 'ope it will do 'er good, likewise the Prince of Wales, as I see in 'is little carridge, a-drivin' about with 'is good lady jest as if they was nobody, as is a-goin' off to them furrin parts 'isself, as I do 'ope he won't take cold nor nothink, and 'ave a good esperienced party to look arter 'im, as is worth all the doctors put together.

Not as I means to run down doctors as is all werry well, but good nusses is 'arf the battle.

I do 'ope as he won't go a-drinkin' none of them nasty waters, as is lowerin' to the constitution, and wot parties misses most abroad is their livin', cos the fowls even ain't got the flavour of the reg'lar Inglish barn-door; and as to the meat, it's all skin and sinneys, as don't give no nourishment; and as to them potted things, they're not the same as a

bit of fresh beef or mutton, tho' better than nothink, of course.

I do 'ope as things is a goin' to be a little bit quiet, for I've got my movin' angin' over me still, and can't 'ave parties a-runnin' in and out for to ask my opinion over every blessed thing as 'appens to come along; as might get to Queen Wictoria's ears, and to be sent for down to Winsor in the middle of a move, would upset my apple-cart, as the sayin' is.

Not as Queen Wictoria would trouble me if she knowed, cos thro' bein' used to movin' 'erself she would feel for me, as ain't got a lot of Ady-camps to lift things about for me; and tho' I'm sure as Susan Jane is a good gal, and a willin' one too, yet in course, can't be espected to be a maid of 'oner at packin'.

Not as ever I trusts anyone with any of my wallybles, as I keeps in a little cedar box, with a patent key, as no one can't pick, nor yet blow open with gunpowder, as is the way with some thieves, and that small, as I can carry it about with me under my cloak anywheres.

But to think of the Merrykins is in course everybody's dooty jest now, poor things, as I always did pity, for they've 'ad a 'ard time on it, with a beastly climate to live in, and bein' many on 'em sent there ag'in their wills, and I've seen

em' a-landin' at what they calls the Battery over there, as is in general werry poor people, and werry kind-treated, I will say, as does credit to the Merrykins; so I am sure we don't want to quarrel with 'em as takes thousands of our poor off our 'ands every year, and if some on 'em does abuse us now and then, I think it's more for the sake of talkin', as they're werry fond on, partikler makin' out as we're jealous on 'em; why, bless their 'arts, I should as soon think of bein' jealous of Susan Jane's best things of a Sunday arternoon, as any one would be jealous of Merrykins.

All they wants is a little good advice, as no one couldu't give 'em better than me; cos I shouldn't 'ave no temper over it; but only speak for their good, jest the same as I did used to my Joe's wife, tho' I must say as I might as well 'ave kep' it to myself for all the thanks as I got.

As to 'er takin' it, why, I might as well 'ave whistled to 'er, as no doubt will be the same with Merryker, but, I don't miud, eos I shall 'ave done my dooty, and lay my 'ead on my piller with a clear conshuuce, as wou't never reproach me, tho' them as I've spoke to, may, like Joe's wife as said I made mischief atween 'em, as goodness knows were the last of my thoughts, but any'ow my intentions was good, an' so they are for the Merrykins as may take it as they please, as shall be satisfied myself in

doin' of my dooty to a feller creetur, as is wot I tried to when over there, tho' often think as pre'aps I didn't speak out enuf, tho' goodness knows I 'ad rows often and often, even to the werry water's edge, as the carridge broke down with me as were a-bringin' me to the steamer, as the man said "No springs couldn't stand some weights," as I didn't notice, tho' pre'aps I did ought to 'ave give 'im a bit of my mind, tho' I were too much took up with a-wishin' them good-bye as I loves, and always shall love over there, and 'ad a lovely bokey of flowers give me as a partin' gift, as is a pretty ideer, and brought tears in my eyes, as oftin thinks of them dear kind friends now, as I 'opes to see ag'in some day, and for their sakes shall love to think of Merryker tho' not blind to the faults of some, but then who is perfect? so if I 'ave spoke out over 'em, they mustn't take it to much to 'art, as it's my way to out with a thing sudden like, as sounds more stronger than I means, tho' I must say as I do like callin' a spade a spade, as the sayin' is, as is wot I calls plain Hinglish.

So when I got aboard that wessel, as I were a-comin' away by in lovely spring weather, arter as 'ard a winter as ever I knowed, as I don't believe as the North Pole 'isself was ever froze 'arder, I thinks to myself on the woyage, as it were pre'aps a dooty to give them Merrykins a bit of adwice

from one as is old enuf to be the mother of a good many, and grandmother to a good many more, so 'opes as I shan't be thought too for'ard in givin' of it now nor yet too old for it to be listened to, for I'm sure I can say with my 'and on my 'art as it's give in good part, tho' not asked, and I only 'opes will be took as such, and no offence where none ain't intended; for I knows my own faults, as every one did ought to look at 'ome for, as don't make me blind to my naybours'.

There can't be no doubt as Merryker is a wonderful country, as well it may be thro' 'avin' got supplied to 'em everythink ready made like, as no doubt they 'ave improved on wot they've got; but what they wants, as I says to 'em, is not for to be always a-givin' in to that 'ere boastin', bouncin' sperrit, and jest to remember as Bragg is a good dog, but Holdfast is a better, as the sayin' is; and it's much better for to glory in what you have done, than to be always a-talkin' of what you are a-goin' to do.

But I must say as in my opinion, they starts wrong in bringin' up their children, never makin' 'em respect 'em, and then they're all in too great a 'urry to get on, partikler over meals, and don't respect their elders.

But I will say as they're a kind 'arted lot, and liberal with their money, and if they wasn't in sich

a 'urry to praise theirselves, parties would often praise them with pleasure.

So now as I would say to 'em if you takes my adwice you'll turn over a new leaf, 'ave a King and Royal Family, and get rid of them diworces and make marriages moro solemnized like; give up that chewin' and spittin' all about, and not be a-drinkin' all day loug with nothink but cold water at 'ome for your wives at dinner, and do make better tea, and pickles, and brew some decent beer, and 'ave cabs about the streets, as might be kep' cleaner with better gas a-burnin', as is nearly as bad as London for darkness, and get rid of them 'lections as is always a-throwin' the country into a constant fomeutation, and gives the power to the ruffs; and wotever you do, don't all try to be fust at once, as causes all the confusion, and then you'll get on and be a fust-rate country, and every one proud to see you, as is only triflin' faults as you've got arter all, as might soon be corrected.

Tho' you wants a new constitushun, and then there wouldn't be no more wars; as would soon bring the taxes down, and the price of things as is now downright ruin, and we might both make things that agreeable as would be always friendly, as is my best wishes, not as I adwises you to go and get a second 'and left off Royal family out of Europe, or anywheres, but pick out someoue from the best among

you, and put 'im at the 'ead of you, and then there won't be any more quarrellin' for the place, as ain't wuth 'avin' arter all.

Cos if you don't, I'll tell you wot'll 'appen some day. You'll 'ave another war, as won't end like the last, in smoke and taxes, but there'll be a real fust rate gen'ral come out as may be pre'aps a Prooshun, and he'll get all the power and make 'isself the 'ead of you all, and knock you about like niggers.

Cos it's all werry well for to talk about never a-submittin' to no army, but you'd be obligated to if there wasn't nobody else but the milingtary to purtect your shops and goods, as is that waluable as you wouldn't like to see broke into, and that mob, if once the masters, would soon make a nice 'ash on, let alone your beautiful 'ouses and 'omes, and your lovely wives and dorters, as is a hornyment to their sect, dressed that lovely of a Sunday as makes a-goin' to church a downright pleasure to look at 'em in their werry best.

Cos don't you fancy as you're not like the rest of the world, and as your ways, as was all werry well pre'aps, when you was all a lot of poor people together, won't wear out.

Be wise in time, as the sayin' is; cos if you don't, you'll get like a unruly crowd, as won't be kep' back by the perlice, but all rushes on together till

a lot on 'em gets smashed, the same as that illumination night of the Thanksgivin'.

I knows as my ways is wot you calls old fashioned, but any'ow they've been tried a long time, and 'ave answered in makin' good men, good women of, and good children, and out of them you must pick and choose so as to get good everythink else.

The cuss of your country is the mob, so mind as you looks out for a chance, and puts it down, or else it will crush you to death and itself to, and then there won't be no more on you to boast nor worret your naybours, and some will say as it's a good riddance when you're gone, as there ain't no reason as you should be if you will but be satisfied with your share of the world, and not go a-tryin' to spread yourselves out that wide till you splits yourselves to bits, as is the way with them as steps to beyond them bounds as 'ave been give to us all, so do remembers as them as grasps at too much, in gen'ral gets nothink in the end, as I'm sure I 'ope won't 'appen to you, for with all your faults I likes you werry well, and if you was to give 'em up, there ain't no livin' creetur as would take to you more kindly than 'er as is your 'umble well-wisher, and rites this 'ere to show as she knows the time of day both sides of the oshun, so 'opes there will be no bad blood, but peace and plenty all the world over,

so let's larf at one another all in good part, and as to the Allyblammer, the sooner it's forgot the better, as were a bad job for all parties, like all the rest of that war.

But, law bless me, 'ow I'm a-runnin' on, and can't get settled at my new place, thro' the stairs a-bein' painted, and must 'ave the chest of drawers took in at the winder, thro' bein' too wide, not to break the bannisters; and as to them painters, you'd think as they was stuck to the place theirselves for life, and is enuf to drive you mad with their dawdlin', and me obligated to set with my 'ands afore me.

But as to Mr. Rammidge, as let us the place, a-wantin' to persuade me a-settin' on a box there as it's a shame for to espose a wile 'ussey as is a-tryin' to pass 'erself off for a real lady, that he never will.

Cos asI says to 'im, "In course, if the Archbishop of Canterberry was to take and marry any outcast, nobody wouldn't say nothink, but only pity 'is taste, and say werry well, only keep 'er to yourself, and don't go a-bringin' of 'er into company where decent women is, or introducin' of 'er to Queen Victoria, without a-sayin' fust, would your Majesty mind a-knowin' of my lady out of the casiner, as I've been and made a 'onest woman on?"

No, indeed; cos tho' parties as ain't be'aved theirselves proper may turn over a new leaf and be

sorry for it, as is all right enuf, but they can't espect as they're a-goin' to be 'onered and respected the same as a good wife and mother as 'ave never 'ad no blemish on 'em.

Cos as I says, "Wot is the use of bein' decent and respectable, if waggerbones is to 'old their 'eads up above you, so altho' a man may be a great willin for esposin' parties as is sailin' under false colours, as the sayin' is, yet in my opinion he's done good in the end, if he shows up a ippercrit as 'ave been a-pretendin' she's respectable and treated as such.

Besides, goodness gracious, jest think of parties as might be contaminated by such wermin a-comin' in contract with them.

I've 'eard of sich fieldmales as 'ave turned pious, and goes about along with bishops preachin' and givin' tracts, and should jest like sich a one to come and try to preach to me, as would soon give 'er a lesson, a impident brazen-faced 'ussey.

So I dried old Rammidge up pretty quick, as the Merrykins says, as certingly 'ave got some of the rummest sayin's out, and is mighty quick at ketchin' a joke, and I do believe, as I've said afore, as this 'ere Allyblammer is only their fun, to take a rise of John Bull.

I suppose as that there anser is full of jokes as will be in the papers, and would 'ave been afore, only

them government of ourn is 'avin' of a 'arty larf over it along with Queen Wictoria 'erself, as loves a joke on the quiet, but in course wouldn't larf afore all them ministers, as might be a-makin' too free over it, so keeps 'em in their place, and will send the Merrykins back quite as good as they've sent 'er, for all their circutus ways of tryin' to come round us, like I see the Regency Park with my own eyes, as ain't never becn noticed wot I considers proper.

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